SageWoman

Celebrating the Goddess in Every Woman

0 74470 81561 7 41

HEALING

ISSUE #25
SPRING 1994

To Our Lady, Friend of Sorrowed Children

You stand before me in my mind,
trembling, but courageous;
facing fears that terrify me even now,
and you but a child of ten.
How did you survive?
It was a miracle that your spirit did not crumble
into a shimmer of iridescent powder
and blow away on that cruel north wind.

I wish that I could return and comfort you.
I would hold you in my arms,
and brush your tangled hair,
I would sing to you,
rocking you back and forth, back and forth,
and rub your thin shoulders
with my strong and gentle hands.
But the years separate us,
farther than the galaxies in the heavens;
and I can only watch you,
my younger self,
in memory,
and wish that I, or someone like me,
could have been there for you.

But someone *was* there, long ago,
unseen, but very real;
the Goddess gave you comfort,
when no other else could.
She held you close with Her arms
of earth and sky and gentle water;
She helped you to shelter your spirit
until it was safe to grow again.
Now, as a grown woman,
I have begun to flower,
to rouse from that long, dormant sleep.

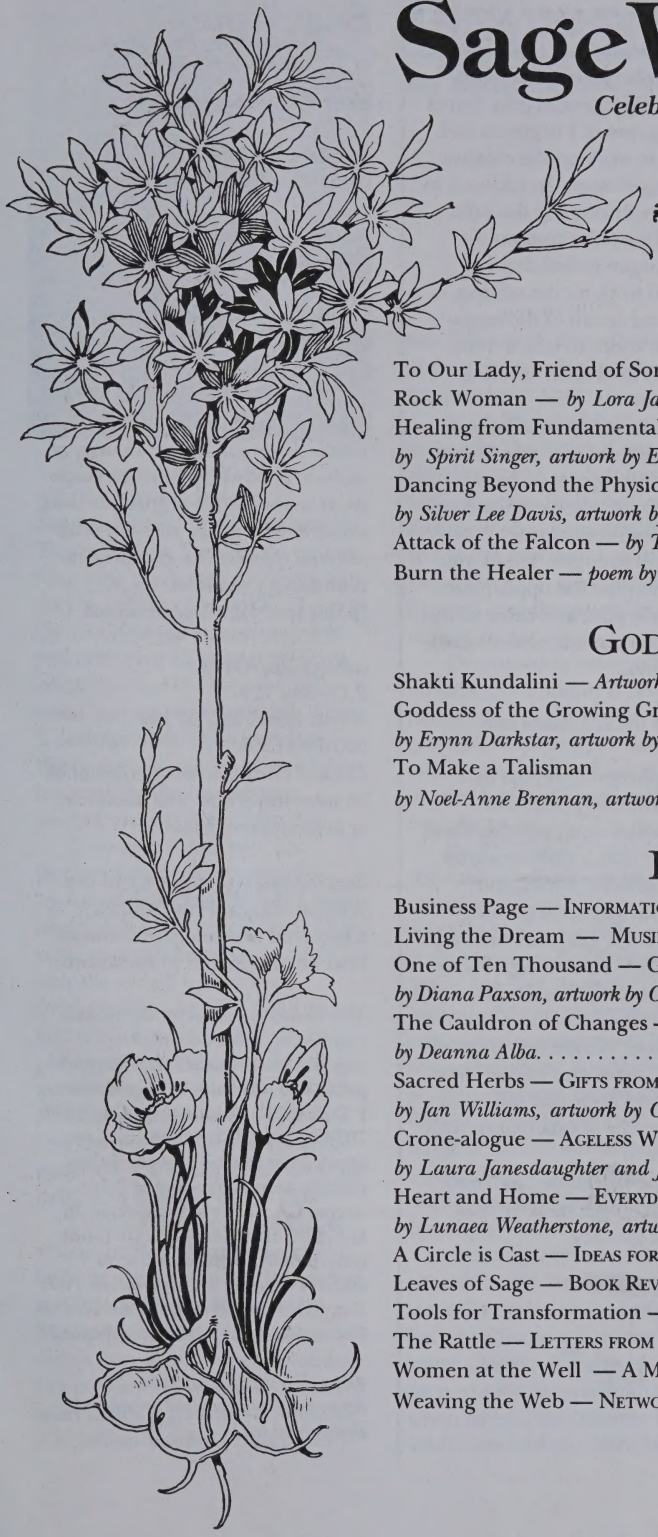
Thank you, Lady,
for saving me
when I could not save myself.

— Aleithia

SageWoman

Celebrating the Goddess in Every Woman

Issue #25
Spring 1994



Healing

To Our Lady, Friend of Sorrowed Children . . . . . .Inside Front Cover
Rock Woman — *by Lora Jansson, artwork by D. Hazeltine.* 6
Healing from Fundamentalism
by Spirit Singer, artwork by Elisa Romero-McCullough 12
Dancing Beyond the Physical
by Silver Lee Davis, artwork by Sudie Rakusin 15
Attack of the Falcon — *by The Moonshadow* 19
Burn the Healer — *poem by Elizabeth Gray* 24

Goddess Spirituality

Shakti Kundalini — *Artwork by B. Lynn DiBiase* 5
Goddess of the Growing Green: Airmid of Ireland
by Erynn Darkstar, artwork by Joanne Powell Colbert 20
To Make a Talisman
by Noel-Anne Brennan, artwork by Mari Jackson . . . . . .Inside Back Cover

In Every Issue

Business Page — Information for our readers 2
Living the Dream — Musings from Anne 3
One of Ten Thousand — Goddess Lore & Ritual
by Diana Paxson, artwork by Cheryl Frances and Kate Cartwright 26
The Cauldron of Changes — Transformational & Practical Magic
by Deanna Alba. 36
Sacred Herbs — Gifts from the Land
by Jan Williams, artwork by Cynthia Cunningham Baxter 38
Crone-alogue — Ageless Wisdom
by Laura Janesdaughter and Judith Tolley, artwork by Misha. 41
Heart and Home — Everyday Enchantments
by Lunaea Weatherstone, artwork by Renee Yates. 45
A Circle is Cast — Ideas for ritual work — *from our readers.* 51
Leaves of Sage — Book Reviews 54
Tools for Transformation — Product Reviews. 55
The Rattle — Letters from our readers 56
Women at the Well — A Marketplace of Goods, Services & Ideas 60
Weaving the Web — Networking Information & Resources 64

SageWoman Wins WPPA Awards

I'm very pleased to report that *SageWoman* was recently awarded the Reader's Choice Gold Award for Best Publication by the Wiccan/Pagan Press Alliance. In addition, our former publisher and editor Lunaea Weatherstone was named Best Editor, and Joanne Powell Colbert, whose art frequently graces our pages (including this issue) was named Best Pagan Artist. These awards are among the highest in Pagan publishing and we are so happy to have been honored! Congratulations to Lunaea and Joanne — thank you for sharing your talents with us. Thank you to all the writers, artists, and readers who make *SageWoman* what she is. We couldn't do it without you! Our congratulations go to the Silver Award Winner, *Enchanté*, and Bronze Award Winner, *Green Egg*.

Anne Newkirk Niven becomes Editor of *SageWoman*

After two issues under the editorial leadership of Mary Barker, I've decided to take on that task myself. As of January 1, 1994, I am operating as both Publisher and Editor of *SageWoman*. Mary Barker, whose work with us was marked by her fine design skills and ever-pleasant persona, can still be reached at her Coos Bay address, and wishes *SageWoman* well as we continue on without her.

For all our faithful readers, who have born with patience the editorial changes which we have made in the last few year, I wish to assure you that this is the last one for awhile.

I have been the publisher of *SageWoman* October of 1991 and in that time I worked mostly on the business side of publishing *SageWoman*. The editors (Lunaea and then Mary) had complete creative control over the magazine and did splendid jobs. But as 1993 progressed, I began to feel the urge to work on the creative side of *SageWoman*. In addition to my work with keeping the bills paid and the subscriptions in order, I began to feel that I wanted to work on the editing, design, and layout of the magazine — in short, to take a more active role in actually creating *SageWoman*.

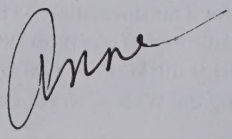
This is my first issue as both Editor and Publisher and I hope that you will enjoy it — please share with me any ideas you have to help *SageWoman* grow in beauty and strength. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share my gifts, and those of our many writers, artists, and advertisers with you.

Welcome back, Lunaea and Rénee!

I'm pleased to report that Lunaea Weatherstone (our former editor and publisher) and her friend and *SageWoman* artist, Rénee Yates, are once again gracing our pages. Beginning with this issue, Lunaea is writing, and Rénee is illustrating, "Heart and Home: Everyday Enchantments," a regular column for *SageWoman*. We are very pleased to have Lunaea and Rénee back with us, and hope you will enjoy renewing your acquaintance with them too.

I hope you enjoy this issue, and will stay with us as we continue our journey.

With love,



SageWoman
Celebrating the Goddess in Every Woman

Issue #25 — Spring 1994

Publisher & Editor
Anne Newkirk Niven

Advertising Director
Christina Alexander

Publishing/Editorial Office
P. O. Box 641
Point Arena, CA 95468-0641
707-882-2052, fax 707-882-2793
Contact Anne for subscriptions, wholesale or retail orders, changes of address, or any other business matter. Anne is also in charge of submissions, artwork, issue topics, and any other editorial information. Copies of our contributor's guidelines are free (please send SASE) upon request.

Advertising Office
P.O. Box 723
North Bend, OR 97459
503-756-1358
Contact Christina about information on advertising rates and deadlines, or to place advertisements.

SageWoman is a member of the Wiccan/Pagan Press Alliance, a national trade organization of Wiccan and Pagan publications.

The views expressed in *SageWoman* may not represent those of *SageWoman* or its staff. *SageWoman* is published quarterly by SageWoman, P O Box 641, Point Arena, CA 95468; 707-882-2052. ISSN 1068-1698. An application to mail at second-class postage rates is pending at Point Arena, CA. Yearly subscriptions: in U.S. $18, elsewhere $28 (US funds only, please.) Postmaster: send address changes to: *SageWoman*, P.O. Box 641, Point Arena, CA 95468.
Entire contents © 1994 *SageWoman*.

Printed in the United States of America, using recycled paper and soybean oil ink.

Living the Dream

by Anne Newkirk Niven

I'm really pleased to be offering you this issue of *SageWoman* on the topic of healing. This is an issue I've wanted to do for a long time. As I mentioned in my last column (issue #23), I credit the Goddess with preserving and protecting my life under difficult circumstances during my childhood and young adulthood. What is perhaps even more wonderful is the multitude of ways in which She has enabled me to continue healing and growing every day.

Less than a year ago, the picture you see above (which appeared from issue #22 on) was hopeful, but not very factual. This is because this picture was taken only three days before I was stricken with a bout of Bell's Palsy, and when I got it back from the photographer I wasn't sure if I would ever look this healthy again. I'm telling this story now because I've learned a great deal from my experience and hope that it will be helpful to many of you as well.

Bell's Palsy is a condition in which the facial nerves are paralyzed and cannot move. Its onset is sudden and its cause a mystery. Most people recover spontaneously over a period of weeks or months, but nobody knows why it occurs, or what makes it go away. Fortunately, it is neither painful nor progressive, but it is profoundly disfiguring and can be very frightening. I found it to be both.

My episode came about very suddenly. On Friday, I was completely normal, on Saturday I noticed some 'fuzziness' in the feeling on my cheek and eye, and by Sunday morning I couldn't smile, laugh, or close my left eye. Control over the nerves of my face was no longer my own.

Compared to many other maladies, Bell's Palsy is relatively benign, for which I am extremely grateful. But, though I was outwardly calm, inside I was terrified; in part, because this ailment was not new to me.

In 1970, when I was eleven years old, my father woke up one morning in January completely paralyzed on one side of his face. It turned out to be Bell's Palsy. My father was built like a bull; with immensely powerful arms and hands, and a physical vitality which seemed endless. Suddenly and without warning, he was struck down by what he believed to be the hand of God. It was an experience I never forgot; a lesson in the unpredictability and devastating fragility of life.

Although my father recovered physically, our family was never the same. Just prior to the incident, my father had returned to the conservative Christianity of his youth, and he never could understand why, when he had just 'returned to the fold', God had punished him with disfigurement. The blow to his spirit was tremendous.

In the following fifteen years, my father developed high blood pressure, diabetes, and finally, heart disease. In March of 1985, he died, at the age of fifty, during his second coronary bypass surgery in less than five years. Less than two years later, my mother died suddenly from a pulmonary embolism at the age of fifty-four.

When I looked back, I realized that I have always thought of my father's Bell's Palsy as the first in a long series of events which led to his early death and that of my mother. Suddenly, at the age of 33, I was experiencing the same condition myself. Was I, too, fated to die at an early age? The thought would not leave my mind.

I was also in the midst of a serious personal crisis; the devastastingly angry breakup of the friendship and business relationship between a respected colleague and myself. This crisis was itself bringing up a lot of emotional pain from my past and causing a great deal of stress.

Fortunately, I was not alone. My spouse and children did the very best thing they could have done; they supported me with their love and care, but didn't overreact about my disfigurement. Several friends visited and did energy healings for me. Those in the Goddess community in whom I confided were also very supportive. In the process of searching for

help I discovered the healing power of homeopathy and jin shin jitsu, two techniques hitherto unknown to me, and both of which I credit with speeding my recovery.

Perhaps most important of all, my instincts for healing were good and I followed them ruthlessly. First of all, I consciously put myself first. I drastically reduced my workload, completely cut off communications with my former colleague (whose very voice one the phone now created in me a terrifying adrenaline rush), and settled down to find out what my body wanted to teach me.

I don't believe that everything in life is a result of our karmic condition or need to experience problems. But having experienced firsthand an unexpected physical and emotional crisis, I now understand that my attitude *can* make a difference in how I experience my life, and that, rather than being bludgeoned by circumstances, I can use them to grow.

Since my illness, (I am now fully recovered) I think that I have started to become a different person. I am still experiencing the fallout of that event; and I'm still learning lessons about myself; about my security needs, and my needs for control and power. Recently I was at the bedside of my father-in-law while he was dying of prostate cancer. Prompted by that experience, I'm also beginning to work, ever so gently, on my fear of pain, suffering, and death. (There's a *lot* of work I have yet to do on that one!)

I've also learned a great deal about being open to the Goddess within. Before my illness, I had never considered myself an artist; but since then, driven by the desire to express my experience, I have begun to paint. To my great surprise and delight, I have discovered gifts of color and creative vision which the Goddess has unexpectedly endowed me; gifts, which. before my illness, I never knew existed.

The painting on the cover of this issue is my own. I feel it is a gift from Our Lady to me, and, I hope, to you. Our Lady of Guadalupe (I know Her as Our Lady of the Roses) offers Her healing energy to all who desire it. She has been teaching me many things I needed to learn in the last year.

In order to heal, I needed to draw firm boundaries around myself, and then, within those boundaries, to open my heart. When She asked me to paint Her, I saw Her surrounded by wild roses; roses with thorns (which protect them from being trampled and destroyed) yet also blooming openly and abundantly.

I now carry this image in my heart; an image of the Goddess, reaching out in healing love, helping us to become open to our own gifts of strength and beauty; whoever or wherever we are. The painting on the front cover of this issue is my attempt to bring this image into the world.

Many women, both courageous and wise, have shared their journeys and gifts with us in this issue of *SageWoman.* While putting together this issue, I have experienced healing from their stories. May this issue be a blessing and a gift to all of you as well.

With hope for all our healing,

♡,

Anne

• • • *EDITORIAL NOTES* • • •

SageWoman is dedicated to celebrating the Goddess in every woman. We encourage women of all spiritual paths to submit writing, artwork, photography, and reviews. We always welcome your letters to The Rattle, our regular 'around the circle' discussion column.

Our Contributor's Guidelines are available from our Editorial Office in Point Arena.

Coming Attractions
These are just suggestions; please don't let them limit your creativity. In addition to thematic work, articles and artwork on Goddess spirituality in general, seasonal material, and writing on your own spirituality is always welcome.

Summer 1994 — 'Sacred Play'. Deadline extended to April 1, 1994 (See issue 24 for suggested topics).

Autumn 1994 — 'Learning and Teaching'. Deadline June 15, 1994. *Topics: learning from people, animals, the spirit world, the natural world. Who are your teachers? What have you taught others? Share what learning and teaching have meant to you . . .*

Winter 1994 — 'Cycles & Seasons' Deadline September 15, 1994. *Topics: Seasonal material , cycles of our lives, birth, death, growing, menopause, menstrual cycles, astrology & so on.*

Information to come: **Spring '95 — 'Friends & Companions'**

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Due to arcane postal regulations, mail recently sent to our previous editorial office in Coos Bay, OR is not being forwarded, and may be lost. **Please do not use the Coos Bay address to reach *SageWoman.***

bld '92

HAZEL TINE ©

Rock Woman

by Lora Jansson
paintings by D. Hazeltine

My shoulders spasmed as I leaned over and touched the pale pink tentacles of the sea anemone. The velvety creature hugged my finger. The clean kiss of salt air pressed through my sweater, and icy waves of salt water chilled my feet. A violent shiver tore up my spine from my sacrum to my neck as the sea air and water cooled my fever. Blue and orange starfish clung to brown rocks cantilevered above the colony of the pale pink and green anemones in the swirling tidal pool. Above it all, the ocean roared and Haystack Rock soared straight up out of the ocean, reaching hundreds of feet into the shining gray sky.

Since my illness, Chronic Fatigue Immune Dysfunction Syndrome (CFIDS), first struck in 1988, my ritual was always the same when we visited Cannon Beach, and this day in February, 1989, was no exception. No matter how ill I felt on my visits to the beach, at low tide I'd visit Haystack Rock to pet the anemones.

Touching these sea creatures was healing for me, but I'm not sure I know why their gentle grip gave me faith.

Touching these sea creatures was healing for me, but I'm not sure I know why their gentle grip gave me faith. Perhaps it was the notion that life can flourish invisible, below the crude surface of what we see with our eyes only.

A foamy wave sprayed over the rock walls of the pool, my signal that the tide was coming in. It was a windy, gray day, so gray that the sky and sea merged into one flat, silvery surface. I walked north on the familiar beach, anxious to return to our room and relax in my lover's arms while the crash of the waves and the howl of the wind serenaded me to sleep.

But before I'd walked one-hundred yards, something made me stop and turn around to look at the ocean one last time. And, looking out, I noticed an unfamiliar sea rock sitting next to Haystack. I knew I must have been mistaken, but I was positive I had never seen that rock before.

It stood about fifteen-feet tall, and was formed in the perfect shape of a stout woman whose head and body were draped in a loose cape and hood. She faced the sea. Her head and back were bent as if she had been caught, frozen in the act of meditation or prayer.

As the days passed, I became obsessed with her. I could not escape the crazy feeling that she was not only in prayer, but that she was trying to tell me something. The graceful bend of her head, the humility in her shoulders, the wind-swept cape she wore — all of these physical details coalesced into a kind of psychic message that I couldn't interpret, but desperately wanted to understand.

Years have passed since that February day at the beach. My illness slowly ebbs, slowly heals. I have learned that my illness is a process that takes me through currents of darkness, through waves of light. I have learned to cling to the light the way the sea anemones cling to my fingers.

I have felt better since we moved from a noisy apartment building into a lovely, old house with a garden. The garden has been neglected and is overgrown.

Still, I love to meander through the small yard,

enjoying the scents, sounds and feel of earth. Every morning a red-headed hummingbird sips nectar from the redwood feeder I have hung in front of my den window. Dappled light falls on the silky needles of a zen-like pine tree that roots in a corner of the yard. Tenor wind chimes sing when a breeze swirls through the garden.

The wooden deck facing the garden receives a good deal of light, and I've given deck privileges to a few friends with no yards of their own. I have told them that they can come over whenever they want to read or write or bask in the sun.

My first deck visitor was Maureen, an advertising copywriter, who is in special need of light right now. She arrived unexpected on a sultry, sunny afternoon last week when I was weeding in the shady part of the garden.

The day was fragrant with that lusty, sweet scent which fills the air after lawns have been watered. Our plants — from the lambsears to the carpathian harebells to the meadow rue — shone as if they had been scrubbed clean and bright. When Maureen walked through the gate, I saw that things were still not going well for her. The smile that used to grace her almond-shaped, hazel eyes was gone. It had been replaced by a frightened, haunted stare. Deep, black circles rimmed her eyes. Her body, usually kept trim and strong through her love of hiking and bike riding, looked slack. She had gained weight which lay awkwardly on her face, arms and legs. I was accustomed to seeing her move gracefully, almost effortlessly, but now she walked with a stiffness, a hesitation.

Maureen is suffering from what some people would call a nervous breakdown, but I know she is not crazy. I recognize her tears, her attachment to her dreams, and her compulsion to write poems rather than ad copy. We are on the same journey, Maureen and I. I know that she is fighting to reconnect with her spirit, her essence. She is searching for that secret center which lives below the surface, that center which sustains us, and focuses on 'being' rather than 'doing,' on nurturing rather than controlling, on creating rather than achieving.

It's only been in the past two months that Maureen, who had long ago mastered the fine art of selling her own talents as a copywriter, began to feel a great and paralyzing lack. Suddenly, she feels her past accomplishments are unimportant, and she is bone weary of achievement. The formerly valuable accolades of success do not speak to her now. Inner voices speak to her, and she dives into dream analysis as if she were fighting for her life. Recounting her terrible nightmares of collapse, death and war, she told me how keenly she feels a lack, and wants a relationship with some unknown part of herself that she 'murdered' long ago. She says she has lost her ability to feel at one with nature, her ability to simply 'be'.

Her boyfriend does not understand what has happened to her. He is violently opposed to, and

annoyed by, the changes in her. He wants the achiever back. He is frightened by the dreamer, by this strange woman who writes poetry. He does not see the value in the work she is doing. In fact, he doesn't see writing poetry, dreaming and grieving as work at all, but as a failure, a surrender to depression and neurosis.

We talked for hours. My own struggle with my illness, and all of the changes it has wrought in my life, has forced me to confront some of the same dark feelings that Maureen was experiencing. The light that guides me is the belief that this illness, even with its pain and loss, is a hard blessing. I feel sure that its purpose is to teach me to how to live in concert with a kind of new and, as yet, undiscovered rhythm. To learn to live in spirit as well as body, to live a whole and connected life. As a woman who was trained to be an achiever and a perfectionist, it is painful, hard work.

Toward the end of the afternoon, Maureen broke down and started sobbing. As I rocked her in my arms, I told her I was sure that the work she was doing was the most heroic she would ever do in her life. Finally, there was nothing else to say. I walked with her toward her car, on the path that ran next to the house.

Toward the end of the afternoon, Maureen broke down. As I rocked her in my arms, I told her that I was sure that the work she was doing was the most heroic she would ever do in her life.

"Stop," I said."Wait here."

I went back to our garden workbench and grabbed a pair of scissors. Then I walked back to where she stood. Next to her were the first blooms of towering gladioli, white as sea foam. I snipped off a stem and handed the flower to her, helpless to do anything but offer her something impermanent, but something of beauty. She looked at me and smiled wearily, but she took the flower and we walked on to the car.

"Call me," I said, hugging her. "If you want to talk."

She allowed herself to be held, but did not hug me back. She climbed into her blue Honda, started the engine and drove off.

Her visit left me achy, tired and feverish. I went back into the garden and tried to take my mind off my pain by pulling weeds.

I was stooped over, straining to dig out the deep root of a giant blackberry vine, when the garden gate clattered open. It was Jean, one of my oldest friends, a woman I met sixteen years ago when I was living in Missoula, Montana.

Jean is a solid woman. She has the stance of a bear — stable, grounded and powerful. Her face, although still animated, still essentially young, is being irrevocably defined by the faint and fine laugh lines around her eyes and mouth.

But she still moves like a girl, exuding a kind of tireless energy. Her red hair cascaded down her back in unruly waves. Dressed in a pair of old, black shorts and a faded, green T-shirt, she grinned when she saw me rise from my weeding, wiping my hands on my blue skirt.

"Clean hands are the sign of a wasted life," she laughed as she raised her hands. Her fingers and nails, stained brown, gave testament to her constant gardening.

As I climbed down from the weeds to greet her, I saw her four-year old daughter, Sarah, standing on the path which runs next to the house. Her long, blond hair caught the sun as she leaned over, examining the gladioli.

She looked like she was going to a birthday party. Her light blue dress sported a rakish, smiling pink rabbit, and although her Mary Jane shoes were made of rubber, they looked like black patent leather. She glanced up as I said hello, but she was more interested in the budding flowers than she was in me. Sarah had been gardening all of her short life. The little girl eyed the weeds around the blossoms critically, and then looked up at me through her sea-blue eyes, silently chiding me for not taking better care of my flowers.

This was the first time that Jean had come to visit since we moved into the new house. She brought gifts — two hosta plants and some pachysandra. She plunked the plants into my arms, told me that I didn't look well, and ordered me to sit down.

She strode into the garden. Without a word, she began roaming through the foliage like a marine looking for a good fight. She ripped away at the worst of the bindweed, its leafy tentacles strangling many of the plants in the beds. Fearless, bare legged, and inappropriately shod with Birkenstock sandals, she did battle with snarls of blackberry bushes.

Twenty minutes later, she had unearthed an oriental poppy, three bushy candy tufts, and two thrift plants that had been trying to bloom under the heavy overgrowth of weeds. Every time she discovered a new treasure, she'd cry an "Ah Hah!" of

victory to me, and would cheerfully ask the plant, "There now, that's much better, isn't it?"

As Jean worked, Sarah entertained herself by watering the plants. Head bowed, using all the strength in her small shoulders, she dragged the long hose around the garden, stopping at every tiny green shoot. She ceremoniously watered every plant as if it were holy, as if she were bestowing a blessing.

Jean and I gabbed in earnest as she continued weeding, and after about fifteen minutes had passed, I suddenly realized that we had not heard so much as a sound from Sarah since we began talking. I turned around and saw her ten feet behind me.

She was crouched in the middle of a mud puddle which she had created in a perfect circle around the Hosta that Jean had planted earlier. She was covered with mud from her toes to her waist.

As she crouched in the mud, she rocked to a silent song that the earth sang to her. As she swayed, her tiny fingers rhythmically kneaded the mud. Her eyes were closed. Her face shined. She looked deeply ecstatic, and wholly a part of the mud and the kneading and the garden.

Then she opened her eyes and smiled. I knew that smile was an invitation to join her. I stared at her small body which looked like a plant growing — fresh and strong and wild. I wanted to join her, but I couldn't. I knew I did not know how to do what she was doing.

They left a few minutes later. The sky hummed lavender, and twilight drenched the garden. I was exhausted and shaky. I knew I had a high fever. As I collapsed in the chaise lounge that faced the garden, I thought of Maureen who was desperately trying to reconnect with her deepest self. Then I thought of Sarah, and knew that once I had been a little girl like her whose spirit was naturally and fully connected with the earth.

I felt lost as I closed my eyes to shut out the day. A long time passed as I tried to dispel my fever and exhaustion by taking long, deep breaths. In meditation, my breathing became smoother and lighter. I felt like I was drifting, floating.

Slowly, in my mind, a vision of Maureen appeared. She looked lost in a moonlit field of leopard grass. It was a cold night, and a bright moon brushed the stiff buff stalks with white light as a faint wind rolled through the field like a wave.

The scratchy heads of the grass raked my legs as I walked toward her. Behind her, I saw the grey-black mouth of a cave. I was drawn to it. I took Maureen's hand in mine. She tried to pull away, but I held on firmly as we walked into the damp darkness.

After only a few steps through the tunnel, we arrived at the entrance to a cave, a cave so huge that I could not see where it ended.

The floor was carpeted with an electric green moss, speckled with star-shaped flowers, white as sea foam. My feet sank into the moss with every step I took, and the soft fuzz tickled my ankles and toes.

The domed rock ceiling merged with walls made of stratified mud stone, long clean stripes of scarlet layered between bands of dusty yellow and ginger brown. The air was humid, touching the walls with a dew that caught the sunlight streaming in through the craters in the cave's dome.

The cave was filled with hundreds of women of every color, race and size. Naked, they all radiated a kind of light. Maureen let go of my hand and walked toward an ancient black woman. The old woman's watery eyes rested on my friend as she crossed the cave. Maureen stooped before the old woman for a moment, and then climbed into her ebony arms. The old woman's hands, gnarled and smooth with use, stroked Maureen's face and hair.

I swam up and my head broke the water. I rubbed my eyes, trying to adjust to the sunlight. I looked up and saw the silhouette of a figure above me. It was the Rock Woman . . .

A cave opening loomed large before me. As I walked through, the sunlight hit me like a laser. I was alone on a bright white beach facing a turquoise sea. Huge waves pounded the white sand. As the waves curled, their color changed to deep blue, and, gathering speed, they crested while a howling wind shaved beards of white foam from their peaks. High, wild, and dangerous, the sea roared, but I was drawn to it. I walked into the wind, toward the sea, feeling the barb of sand cut into my skin as I dropped my clothes.

My legs began to tremble as I got closer to the surf. Broken bits of rock and, shell scraped the soles of my feet. A bead of salty sweat dripped onto my lips. I walked into the warm water up to my waist and waited.

Then I saw it.

Coming right at me, the wave, a one-hundred foot tall wall of white water, exploded as it peaked. I closed my eyes, took a breath and dove, kicking with all my might, my arms pulling through the water.

But the undertow caught me, and my body began tumbling, somersaulting through the current. My lungs were bursting, but I was held under. Finally, I could wait no longer. Desperate, I drew a breath, knowing I would drown. But the water did not choke me. It was fluid, but felt like warm air in my lungs. I drank in several water-breaths, hungry for oxygen. Opening my eyes, I swam with the current into the cold, deepening, black-green water. I could feel goose bumps rising on my arms and legs. I drifted into a towering field of verdant kelp. The velvety fronds tickled my buttocks and back as I glided through the dense sea forest.

Suddenly, I broke through the kelp into open water, and saw, only a few yards in front of me, a colossal sea creature. I quickly turned and swam back to the safety of the fronds. Peeking out from behind a kelp trunk, I examined the beast.

I was minute; she was infinite. Her body was a deep, shining green. Her arms moved slowly, rhythmically, and I knew it was she that created the tides. Her eyes glowed with the light that fed the sun and the stars. Her tail merged into the earth's very crust. My fear lessened, and I slowly swam out from the kelp forest toward her. Waves of golden curls flowed from her immense head. I saw a strand of her hair floating next to me, suspended in the water. The shimmering hair was as thick as my thumb, and I followed it a short distance to its end; it was connected to a purple jellyfish. A silver dolphin darted through the water next to me, chattering its song in my ear. I saw that she, too, had a golden strand coming from her belly. I looked down at my own belly and saw that I, too, was connected to the great beast.

Then I saw that there were an infinite number of strands growing from her head, and I knew that this great creature was rooted to all living things.

Of all of the golden hairs that grew from her massive head, one seemed to glow brighter than the rest. It reached straight up. I followed it up and up, through the cold, black-green current to where the water became warmer. The sea, feeling silky against my skin, turned to a clear, light blue. I looked up. The surface was only a few feet above me. I swam up and my head broke the water. I felt the crisp bite of oxygen filling my lungs. I rubbed my eyes, trying to adjust to the sunlight. I looked up and saw the silhouette of a figure above me.

It was the Rock Woman from Cannon Beach. Then she seemed to fade, and the vision was over. I heard the creak of wood as I shifted my weight in the chair. I opened my eyes. It was almost night. Twilight had darkened to purple. A dog barked in the distance. I could hear the swish of a sprinkler. The smell of barbecue filled the air. In the distance, a child screamed with delight. I rose from my seat, turned on the hose and sprayed water on the most barren section of our garden. When the water was a deep pool, I took off my shoes and sank my toes into the cool ooze. I started to rock as my hands entered the mud, and the earth slid through my fingers.

Lora Jansson lives in Seattle, Washington

Healing Myself from Fundamentalism

by Spirit Singer

illustration by Elisa Romero-McCullough

As one of the many people who have fled the terror of Christian fundamentalism, I know that few of my sisters and brothers who have left the church know how to find healing. We think it is enough to get away from our persecutors. But, like battered women who have internalized their abuse, we are filled with self-doubt, rage, and terror; often we are

plagued by nightmares and depression. And, worst of all, in our secret heart of hearts, many of us are still afraid of the hateful god and the devil we were taught to fear. I've found that it was not enough for me to flee my batterers; I had to find healing for my wounds before I could be a whole and healthy person.

Not all the damage was emotional. Often, if the inner wounds are not healed, sooner or later they will manifest themselves in body pains and illness.

I was the oldest child of a fundamentalist preacher, in a small denomination that seperated itself from the Southern Baptist Church because the Baptists were 'too liberal'. I left the church once as a teen-ager, but found the lack of a spiritual life too lonely. So I returned to the church, thinking that if I really tried hard enough, I could learn to be pleasing to 'god' and not be a 'rebellious woman'. After years more of misery, including being raped by a preacher, I finally was blessed with a mild nervous breakdown; mild enough that I didn't have to be hospitalized, but serious enough to scare me into looking seriously at my life and honestly at the church for the first time.

I finally left the church but I kept looking among other Christian denominations for a church in which I could be happy. I attended everything from Roman Catholic Churches to Jehovah's Witness Fellowships. In the process, several crucial things happened to me.

1. I finally decided that the true God of love was *not* the god of the Christian churches. I believe that the Father God of love is just as much a stranger to Christianity as is the Mother Goddess.

2. I learned that there was a spiritual world *outside* that of the churches, and had some intense experiences of that reality.

3. I experienced a healing experience with Jesus and discovered that the Jesus I had been taught about in the church was not the only Jesus. In fact, it was the spiritual Jesus who began to teach me about Mother God.

4. I learned that woman-hatred is rampant in every Christian church. In my experience, some churches concealed their inherent misogyny better than others, but it was present everywhere. I became a lay speaker and teacher in some of

I believe that the Father God of love is just as much of a stranger to Christianity as is the Mother Goddess.

the most liberal churches, only to run up against bishops and church leaders who hated women. I had the privilege of being thrown bodily out of one fundamentalist church. I thank the Goddess for it; that experience helped me to finally see the light. For me, being a woman in any Christian church was like volunteering to be a battered woman.

Due to all these experiences, I finally found my freedom. By reading Christian and Jewish mystics and finding Mother God in the Bible, I was freed psychologically of my need for the church. In addition, I found an enlightened mate who loves the Goddess.

I had no reason to be unhappy; my marriage was wonderful, my children were grown, and I was doing what I wanted to do.

But I was not healed. Encounters with fundamentalists could send me into a blinding rage, or a pit of depression.

It was my body that finally showed me how wounded I still was. As I began moving into menopause, I developed arthritis, terrible headaches and strange aches and pains all over my body. My doctor put me on hormones and I got even more sick. Finally, after over $4,000 in tests, the hospital said "We don't know what's the matter with you," and sent me home. It finally dawned on me that whatever was making me sick was nothing the medical community could help me with. I started asking Mother God to lead me to a healer.

The healer I found was a psychotherapist who had gone into massage therapy because she didn't believe that psychotherapy was helping people like it should. She had developed her psychic and spiritual skills so that she could listen to the inner self of her patients, which spoke through their bodies. I told her very little about myself, but by our second massage session together my body had told her everything. It was she who pointed to my life-long spiritual and psychological abuse as being at least one of the causes of my aches and pains.

When she told me that I needed to mourn and cry for my past abuse, I just couldn't; that volcano was sealed. When she told me to write about it, I couldn't do that either. All I could do was sit in front of my computer and shake.

"What shall I do?" I asked.

"Don't worry, we're doing it," she said gently.

"If I start crying, I'm afraid I'll never stop," I said.

"No one can cry for the rest of their life," she laughed.

I wasn't so sure.

As she worked with my body, buried memories came out. And the flood of tears came closer to the surface. Finally, my volcano erupted, and I spent two weeks in a

deep depression. But I was astonished to find that the tears flooding out every day were the mourning that I had never been able to do. During my recovery, a friend gave me the book, *Descent to the Goddess,* which seemed to explain everything I was feeling. It filled me with joy, and I fell in love with Ereshkigal, the goddess of the underworld.

Since then, my aches and pains have subsided; even my arthritis has improved dramatically. I had previously changed my diet and begun exercising, but these improvements in my life-style didn't seem to have any effect until after my emotional healing took place.

Last year, I was able to celebrate the summer solstice with ritual, and I can now wear my goddess pendant in public with joy, instead of in fear of encountering my former fundamentalist friends and starting the slide into depression and rage.

The healing process is different for every person, depending on a number of factors; how long they were subjected to fundamentalism, their age and circumstances at the time, and how intense their experience was. Fundementalism battered and wounded my mind, soul, and spirit. Perhaps the same thing happened to you as well. If your body is sick, it might be a reflection of your inner wounds.

Here are some steps I found helpful in healing. You may want to investigate some of them to help in your healing as well.

1. Mourn for your wounded child. Even if your experience was as an adult, the pure heart of your inner child can be terribly injured by the self-hatred preached in the churches. Tears are Mother Nature's outlet for pain; they wash away the hurt and can help you to heal. Watch sad movies, write or talk about your experience; whatever it takes for you to encourage your inner tears to manifest themselves.

2. Read and study to heal your mind. Fundamentalist doctrines are often akin to brainwashing. Like a deprogrammer, it may help to take another look at what you were taught with a more critical eye. If you can, it may help to re-read the Bible with a feminist-Goddess viewpoint to see how the patriarchs have twisted scriptures out of context to fit their own purposes. Matthew Fox's books *Original Blessing* and *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ* and Virginia Ramsey Mollenkott's book *The Divine Feminine, The Biblical Imagery of God as Female,* were very useful for me in this context.

3. Heal your soul and psyche with spiritual practice. All things psychic are condemned as 'the devil's work' in many fundamentalist churches, largely because they are sources of divine inspiration which the patriarchs cannot control. Let yourself experience that part of yourself which you may have kept locked away; meditate, write positive mantras and repeat them whenever you feel fear creeping up on you. You don't need to have ESP — art is good for the soul. Paint pictures, draw, sing, write or listen to music, go to concerts. As Carl Jung said, "Creativity emerges from the realms of the Mothers." So, let your own creativity, which may have so long been squelched, come out with abundance! Own your dark side, too; learn to love the fierce Goddess in yourself, let yourself muse upon Goddesses like Ereshkigal and Medusa. When haragued or harassed, I like to practice (mentally) turning hateful men to stone with a look! Learn to love names like 'bitch' and 'witch'. No one uses those terms of women who aren't working with their power. I consider them compliments!

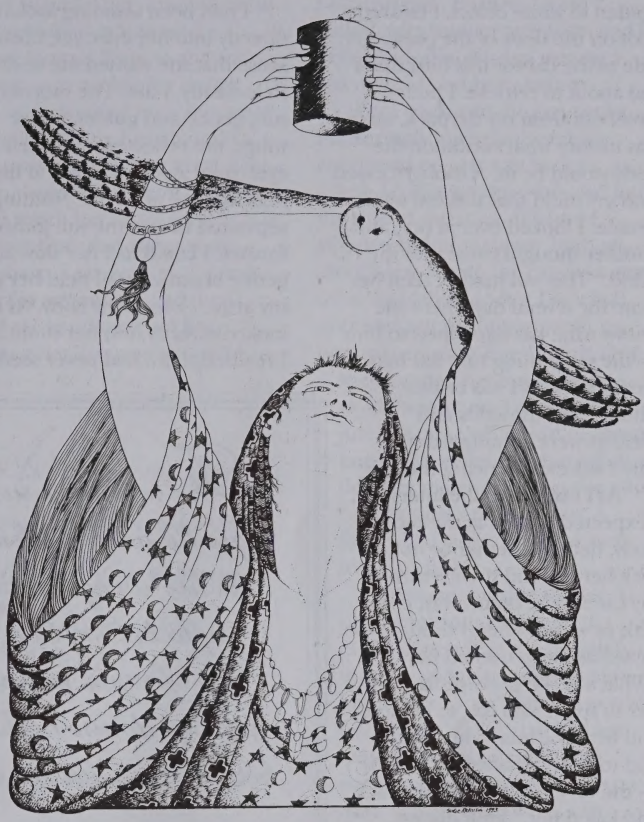
4. Heal your spirit with ritual. Soak your spirit in as much woman power as possible. Do healing rituals with groups of women, or with mixed groups if you prefer. The important thing is that the ritual must be healing for you. There's a reason why books like Starhawk's *The Spiral Dance* are so popular — ritual works.

5. Honor your body. Fundamentalist churches teach that the body is evil, but even their own Bible refutes that belief. Visualize your own body as the body of the Goddess, for so it is! Healing the past condemnation of your body can be done by glorying in ritual nakedness, wild and happy (and safe) sex, and a conscious sense of your own sexuality. Treat your body to massage, delicious oils, and good and healthy food. Indulge yourself. You deserve it.

Fundamentalist Christianity for women can cause self-denial and self-abnegation, too often ending in hatred of self and of everything female. To heal yourself requires just the opposite: self-affirmation, self-appreciation, self-love and love of everything female. When you can love yourself as a part of God/dess you can then reach out with that love to others. ♀

Spirit Singer lives in the Southwestern United States in the Sangre de Christo Mountains. She recently finished writing two books, and is looking forward to becoming a grandmother this April.

Dancing Beyond the Physical



by Silver Lee Davis
drawing by Sudie Rakusin

Sitting here in the early morning sun next to this magnificent pine with the sounds of birds and trees singing, and the far off voices of women that I love, I am able to hear the voice within me. The setting here is glorious: the garden, the trees, the mountains beyond. I sit here with bare feet, one foot touching the blood and tear stained towel of yesterday. The experience was so overwhelming, that I'm tempted to think that it couldn't have really happened. But then, I look at the towel beside me, and know that it really did.

The last thing I did before leaving Seaside, California, was to pack my sage and several crystals. At the time, I asked myself why, but had really no idea —just a feeling I had that they might be needed. I backed out of my driveway at 4:45 a.m., wanting to give myself plenty of time to get north to Woman Share before dinner. As I drove, I consciously focused: grounding, centering, shielding, running energy and self healing. I was also listening for inner self-guidance. I put in a cassette tape of Diamond Harbor that a friend gave me years ago. This music evokes the deeper aspects in me; it sings of the higher order. I went with the music and was well within myself as I drove.

When I am driving, I tend to continuously scan the world around me, and I am always touched by the birds that I see. They do magic for me; pushing me deeper into myself and firmly connecting me with Mother Earth and Father Sky. The earth and sky were particularly magnificent that morning, and I was feeling blessed and satisfied.

While scanning the interstate, I saw a large bird alongside the edge of the road on the opposite side. It was flat on the gravel, its wing perpendicular to the ground. It had the golden colors of an owl. The word 'Owl' screamed in my mind, over and over, screams which would not subside as I continued. The owl is sacred to me and is one of my animal guides. I found myself compelled to turn around and ask permission to take some of the owl's feathers. I did not realize it, but at that moment I had given over control of the morning, as well as my life.

I exited the freeway and reentered it, going the opposite direction. As I returned, having made a complete circle, I parked directly across from where the owl lay. It was a barn owl, with a dramatic heart shaped face and prominent eyes and beautiful

golden to white colors. I cleared a spot on the floor of the passenger side of the car for this bird that I was about to retrieve. I pulled a towel out from my daypack, since I was unsure what condition the body would be in. A thought eased into my mind that this owl was female. I looked over at her, and another thought came into my mind, "This owl has not seen her mate for several days. Now she knows what has happened to him — the same thing that has happened to her." I was unsure where these thoughts and feelings were coming from, or why I was experiencing them.

As I ran across the interstate, I expected to look at the owl's body, decide whether or not to pick her up, and then return to my car and be on my way, either with or without her. I thought to myself as I approached her, "What a noisy, godless place for her to suffer and die, to lie here and bear the loss of her mate, and to hear car after car roar by — the very thing that had struck and killed her." I felt disgust, and contempt for the Gods. But suddenly, before I had time to think about what condition her body might be in, she turned her head, opened her eyes fully on me, and seized my soul. I felt she had been waiting for my arrival. I had never thought for a second that she might still be alive! I felt myself fly out of my body in horror, and she immediately flew in. I was so shocked by her pain that I thought for a brief moment that I was going to collapse from what I was feeling.

I am unsure of exactly what I did next. The only thing I was certain of was that her eyes were wide open and penetrating mine. I wrapped her up in my towel, speaking words to her that I don't remember and tried to come back to myself as I waited to cross the road and carry her back to my car.

I had been avoiding looking directly into her eyes, yet, I could sense that she wanted me to do so. Reluctantly, I did. The morning sun, gentle and golden as her wings, was reflected in two sets of eyes; mine, looking down at her, hers looking up at me. Nothing separated us and the sun joined us further. I could feel her slow and gentle breathing as I held her in my arms, close to my body. As I looked directly into her sunlit eyes, I realized that I had never seen nor felt so much of the universe as I did now. For a brief second, I felt full, complete, and then the feeling went beyond my human capacity to feel or comprehend. My soul was pierced. The universe entered. My body was too small to contain all that I was feeling; it seemed that, somehow, I was too limited to understand.

The morning sun, gentle and golden as her wings, was reflected in two sets of eyes; mine, looking down at her, hers looking up at me.

To explain the depth of emotion, the range of knowingness that I sensed she felt, would be like trying to draw the size of the universe on a 3" x 5" card. In this case, I would be the 3" x 5" card, and her depth of emotions and range of knowledge would be the size of the universe. I saw everything in her eyes. I don't know what I looked like to her; she was the one in clarity, while I was the one in shock. I can't say how long we stood there, looking at each other; something happened between the two of us that I can't adequately explain. I went from knowing nothing to knowing everything within five seconds. How was that possible? How could it have happened?

Because of what had happened between us, I was incapable of simply placing her in the spot in my car which I had cleared for what I thought would be the dead body of an owl. I walked around to the driver's side of my car and got in, speaking to her quietly, and doing the best I could to calm myself, and quiet my own weeping.

Her wing was so badly broken that it now lay on the opposite side of her body. Her hollow wing bones protruded at the break, and I could see the deep red of her flesh underneath the gravel and clay that layered her skin.

Sobbing deeply, I knew that I needed to gather my self back inside myself and do what I could for the owl's comfort. I surrounded her with emotional tenderness as she lay in my lap and positioned her so that she would not crush her broken wing. She lay on her back, looking horribly unnatural, clutching her broken wind with her left claw, motionless and bleeding into my lap. I, too, was bleeding, for only a few hours before, I had started my period, perhaps at about the same time she had been struck down.

Together, we pulled the car out onto the interstate. I don't know if I was doing the thinking or the owl was putting thoughts into my head, but I knew that I needed to find a quiet, shady place to lay her on the ground and soothe her as best I could. I pulled off at the next exit and stopped in a field

under several eucalyptus trees, placing her gently in their shade. I gathered my sage and crystals that I had wrapped up only hours before and spread them out next to her. I saged around her, and then cleansed myself and my crystals with the sage as well. Occasionally, she turned and looked at me, while she continued to clutch her broken wing. I moistened her beak and picked the surface debris from her wound. I placed crystals all around her and then placed my hands on her, one behind her head and the other in her free, opened talon. I had stopped crying by now, and was present enough to comfort her and move as she might direct me. I knelt beside her in prayer, opening myself to further guidance. I had done all that I could. It did not seem appropriate to leave her there, yet, it seemed no more appropriate to put her back in the car. Once again I wrapped her up, holding her in my arms as I talked gently to her, and got back into the car. I was unsure what my role now was.

I started the car, and had barely reached sixty miles an hour when I saw another owl lying on the side of the road, just as she had been. I thought to myself, "I wonder if that could be her mate?" Within seconds of my thought, the owl in my car came alive. She sat straight upright, her broken wing brushing against the steering wheel as if she wanted me to turn the car around and go back to where the other owl was lying. Her good wing lay open against my chest. She hissed, screamed, and then relieved herself all over me and the front seat. Then she staggered across my lap towards the door. I had no reference point for this situation occurring while traveling at 60 m.p.h., and I didn't know what to do. I talked to myself; I talked to her. Then I pulled off to the side of the highway and stopped the car. By now, she was hanging onto my left leg by her talons and bleeding onto my pants. She was breathing heavily and I could sense she was in a great deal of pain. I was unsure how or if I should touch her again since I knew her beak and talons were razor sharp. I sat, searching inside myself for a moment, and then placed my hands around her, wrapping her in the towel and finally put her on the floor board of the passenger side of the car. She lay there motionless, spent from the inside out. I could hear nothing but her thoughts, alive inside my head, insisting that we return to her mate who lay at the side of the road. I assured her that we would do so. But before doing that, I stopped at the rest stop to focus and gather myself together.

As I made my way to the restroom, I looked for someone who might be able to help an injured owl. I found that person to be me.

As I made my way to the restroom, I looked around for someone who might be able to help an injured owl. I thought for a moment what such a person might look like and began to search for this person. In a moment, I found that person to be myself. I went to the restroom, resolute in my knowledge that I was the person to help this owl. By now, I wasn't feeling very human anymore, and I wondered what kind of woman I was now, or had been before.

I got back into the car, spoke reassuringly to the owl, and we continued on our way back to where I had seen the other owl by the side of the road. When we stopped by her mate we both sat motionless inside the car for some time. As I talked to her I reached over and put my finger gently on her opened claw. For the first time, she clutched my finger, and would not let go. I sensed that, just like me, she couldn't bear to know with certainty what condition her mate was in, yet she also couldn't bear not to know. I finally had to pry her claw away from my finger.

Stepping outside the car, I prayed for inner strength. I could not endure the thought that this owl might also be alive but in pain. Yet I hoped it would not be dead. I approached her mate in a state of emotional surrender. I soon saw that her mate was indeed dead. His wing was severed and broken, but the body was still fresh, with only the underparts that were touching the gravel beginning to be eaten away. I held this owl up to the sky and asked that the spirit within be cleanly and completely taken.

In Native American tradition, the owl symbolizes clairvoyance, and in many cultures it is a symbol for wisdom. The owl has come to me many times in my dreams, and for me to be honored with its feathers would strengthen my bond with its powers. So I asked permission to take some feathers from the body of this dead owl. I took the outermost part of the wing, and thought I was ready to go, but felt I was being mentally summoned back to take some tail feathers. I took two feathers, not

knowing why, then gently placed the owl in a bed of grasses with his head facing away from the highway. I thanked him, and headed back to my car.

As I returned to the injured owl in my car, I sensed that she already knew that her mate was dead. I told her that her mate had departed and that it was OK if she did so as well. I laid the wing and feathers next to her, not knowing what to do next. It was now 10:10 a.m., and I told her that I would continue driving until 10:30 a.m. in hopes that an answer would come to me. At 10:28 a.m. she spoke to my mind and told me to get off the interstate. We exited at the Clear Lake exit, Highway 20. Even though I was the one behind the steering wheel, it was clear to me that she was doing the driving that morning. I could do nothing other than what she directed. We turned right, away from Clear Lake and headed east towards the mountains in the distance.

I thought about WomanShare to the North. I found myself wondering if I would make it there by nightfall; indeed, if I would make it there at all in the next eight days of my planned vacation.

Through sight and sound in my mind, the owl continued to speak to me. I was unable to comprehend many of the visions and words that I was receiving; the information came too quickly, and was too much to grasp. I told her that I would go wherever she wanted to be, if she would just let me know where. As I looked up from saying this, I saw a sign on the side of the road which said, 'Colusa National Wildlife Refuge'. I immediately felt her desire for me to go there. As we drove into the refuge, I told her that she had picked a beautiful place to transcend. As I said this, we both somehow slipped into a deeper, quieter, calmer place together. The Colusa refuge was magnificently calm, filled with beautiful grasses, reeds, and trees. After about twenty minutes of driving I saw a willow tree next to a field of reeds. Somehow, this seemed to be the place. I stopped the car and walked through the tall grass to the willow. As I was thinking how absolutely serene it was in this place, the ground in front of me came to life; a ring-necked pheasant abruptly took flight. This refuge was saturated with life. I was certain that the path of transcending was well worn for her to follow. I returned to the car, picked up my friend in my arms and walked back to the willow. I laid her down in the grass with plenty of sky overhead for her to slip into.

This refuge was saturated with life. I was certain that the path of transcending was well worn for her to follow.

The owl, who I now called 'Colusa', was in her rightful spot, and no longer needed me. I knew she would slowly pass out of her body and transcend into the sky. I knew I needed to transcend back to the earth. We were somehow trading places; she slipping out of her body, me slipping back into mine. I placed one of her mate's tail feathers at her forehead to help her leave her body and cleanly and completely fly away home.

I prayed and cried, feeling her pain, strength, and the agonizing slowness of her journey home. I longed for quick passage; I was impatient. She told me that it was necessary for this passage to be slow; it could not be rushed. She was using the time to gather herself so that she could slip out easily and completely. I sensed that she was satisfied with the place where she lay. I sat in quiet solitude with her, watching her chest move up and down as she continued to breathe. It was time to depart; her on her journey, and I on mine. I said good-bye to my brave friend and thanked her for blessing my life.

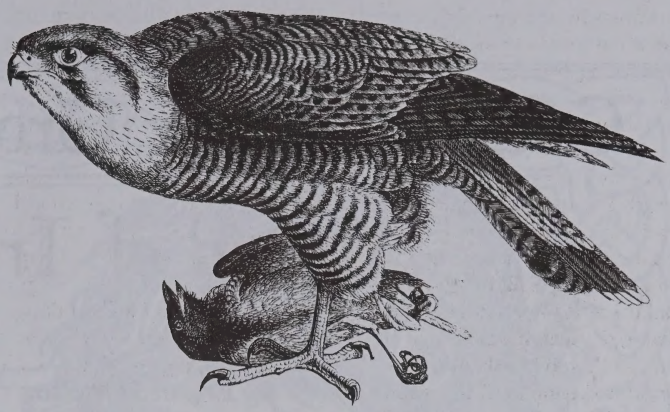
I left her there to breathe the pure air and be comforted by the sounds of her own kind as she said good-bye to her old self. When she was ready to transcend, I knew the breeze would help lift her into the sky to say hello to her new self.

As I slowly made my way out of the refuge, I thought to myself that I was not the same woman who had left home early that morning. In two hours I had experienced what seemed like a hundred years. Returning to the interstate, I headed north with the memory of Colusa quietly alive and deep inside me.

She still has many lessons she longs to teach me. For now, I know that my life has changed. A veil has been lifted and willingness to learn more guides me on my way.

Silver Lee Davis is a nonfiction writer, poet and artist. She delights in practicing simplicity and compassion in her daily life.

Attack of the Falcon



by the Moonshadow

Legend has it that many great discoveries have been made while sitting in the bathtub, and the other day while I was sitting on another bathroom fixture, the same thing happened to me. While answering Mother Nature's call, I glanced out the window of our farmhouse and saw what appeared to be two birds, stuck together and awkwardly flying right into my face. They disappeared beneath the window sill, so I hurriedly completed my business and ran to an adjacent window to investigate.

What I saw there was extraordinary. Outside the window a peregrine falcon was stomping the life out of a dove it had snatched up from the neighbor's lawn. At a falconry demonstration once I had seen that peregrines could be amazingly efficient killers in the air, but what was happening before me was more reminiscent of a slow and brutal murder.

My first impulse was to intervene on the behalf of the dove. But I realized that saving the dove from the falcon would be the same as stealing someone's paycheck.

So I stood there watching the falcon completing its business; but slowly, the drama in front of me took on a strange symbolism in my mind. Recently, I had been diagnosed with breast cancer. I stared at the two birds, engaged in their dance of life and death, and wondered why I had been chosen to witness this event. Was it a message from the Goddess? If so, which one of the birds was me, and which was the cancer? Was I the falcon, destroying my malignancy? Or was I the victim, the dove?

Abruptly, the falcon picked up the dove and flew away, leaving me to ponder the mystery alone. I examined the incident from all sorts of angles, trying to puzzle out its meaning. I even considered whether I wasn't reading too much into it — maybe it wasn't an omen at all. I told my friends what had happened, then it slipped from my mind, crowded out by all my treatment related activities.

About a week later, the mail brought me an article ("Cheating Fate", *Health*, April 1992) about spontaneous remissions, which contained several extraordinary stories of people who had completely recovered from some of the deadliest forms of cancer.

Then the story of a 14th century Sevite monk and priest suddenly sprang alive. As the story goes, the monk was too busy doing good works to surrender to the advanced cancer which had developed on his foot. So, the monk prayed to God for a cure, and, the night before the scheduled amputation of his foot, the tumor disappeared. The monk lived to the age of 80.

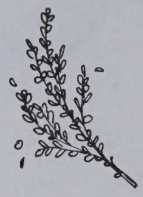
The monk's name was — St. Peregrine. Finally, I had my answer. Now, saints are not normally part of my pantheon and the two birds were of no religion but their own. Yet, for reasons known only to Herself, the Goddess chose to use Catholic symbolism to send me an important message. She wished to tell me that I have a fighting chance to cure myself and that I should take the opportunity.

We can never predict that way that the Goddess will come to us. We should never disregard any possibility, for they are endless, as is She. And, if we work to heed Her messages, however they manifest, we will eventually come to understand and gain Her wisdom. ♋

The Moonshadow is a Druid/Discordian who lives in central New Jersey.

Goddess of the Growing Green

Airmid of Ireland



by Erynn Darkstar
Goddess portrait by Joanne Powell Colbert

The Celts honored hundreds of deities throughout the British Isles and Western Europe. A few are known through tales and poetry, but of most, little is known beyond the names, taken from inscriptions in stone.

When thinking of Irish healing Goddesses, most minds turn immediately to Brighidh. But Brighidh is not the only healing Goddess of the Irish. The stories of Airmid are few. She is mentioned only two or three times in all the translated Irish tales. Airmid is an herbal healer, part of a family of healers among the Tuatha dé Danann, one of the groups of Gods and Goddesses of Pagan Ireland. Together with her father Dian Cécht and her brother Miach, a God of surgery, she tended a sacred spring that brought the dead back to life. The tales tell us

"*the slain and mortally wounded were cast into a healing well over which Dian Cécht, his sons Miach and Octriuil, and his daughter Airmed sang incantations, and all were restored to full vigor.*"[1]

As a healer, Airmid surpassed her father in power, for while Dian Cécht replaced the severed arm of the dé Danann king Nuadha with one of silver, she and Miach regenerated the flesh arm to perfect health. The healing charm they recited remains in Celtic folk use even today.

"Bone to bone
Vein to vein
Balm to balm

Sap to sap
Skin to skin
Tissue to tissue

Blood to blood
Flesh to flesh
Sinew to sinew

Marrow to marrow
Pith to pith
Fat to fat

Membrane to membrane
Fibre to fibre
Moisture to moisture"[2]

Folk tradition is powerful, remaining in the memory of the people for generations after the reasons for the traditions die away. There may be no explanation, only that "this is the way it has always been done." Such is the power of the growing green. Cut down a rowan tree and a dozen young saplings arise from the stump to take its place.

As the origin of the charm was lost from memory, so the secret of healing herbs was lost to the people as well. Dian Cécht, jealous because he could not compete with Miach's surgical skills or Airmid's powers of regeneration, killed his son, and confused the herbs that grew from his grave so that mortal humans would not share in the power and immortality of the Gods.

"*After that, Miach was buried by Dian Cécht, and three hundred and sixty-five herbs grew through the grave, corresponding to the number of his joints and sinews. Then Airmed spread her cloak and uprooted those herbs according to their properties. Dian Cécht came to her and mixed the herbs, so that no one knows their proper healing qualities unless (she) taught them afterwards. And Dian Cécht said, "Though Miach no longer lives, Airmed shall remain."*[3]

Airmid's herbs, spread upon her cloak, were scattered by her father. Yet Airmid still remembers the powers of the herbs, and can teach us their secrets. Through her, we may learn to use and appreciate the sacred power of plants and healing waters.

Her medicinal herbs were powerful, offering cures for every part of the body. The symbolic number 365 tells us that, with time, Airmid's herbs can heal all wounds. Airmid's herbs have power throughout the solar year, whether in seed and root, bud and stem, or flower and leaf. Fresh in spring or dried in the dead of winter, the herbs have effect. She works through nature's cycles, and through the energy that connects the body's joints and sinews in lines of power.

Is Airmid, the Goddess of medicinal plants, only a healer of the body? The simple answer is no; the healing power of every green place looms palpably within it. We have but to stand in a grove of trees or listen to the rush of a fern-circled waterfall to feel the weight of our spiritual and emotional wounds begin to lift from our shoulders. The healing power of plants goes far beyond their physical effect on human biochemistry.

When we delight in the color and scent of blooming flowers, the heady green scent of pines and cedars, the healing power of Airmid is there. In our cup of honeyed tea, she resides. She dwells in forest and field, and for those of us living in cities, she dwells in the potted herbs of garden shops, the apartment window box, and the stubborn yellow dandelion pushing out of a crack in the sidewalk.

The essence of Celtic religion is found in contradictory states, in the neither/nor, the liminal fringe. Airmid is that Celticly odd balance of toughness and delicacy that manifests in the blackberry — bright, fragile blossom and tangling thorn. She creates life from death, bringing healing from the grave of Miach. Three kinds of

When we delight in the color and scent of blooming flowers, the heady green scent of pines and cedars, the healing power of Airmid is there. In our cup of honeyed tea, she resides.

medicine were recognized by Brehon law;[4] surgery, dietary control, and herbal healing. Herbalists were greatly respected and had a fairly high status in Celtic society. The "women-physician of the *túath*" or tribe (*banliag túaithe*) was considered independent of her husband and commanded her own honor-price,[5] unlike many other women in Celtic society. The *banliaig túathe* was most likely an herbal healer and midwife. Herbalism was considered a very important part of Irish medicine, and this would have made Airmid a Goddess of some stature, despite the few mentions of her in the Irish mythological texts. *"The sagas and law-texts agree in stressing the medical importance of herbs. Táin Bó Cúaligne describes how a poultice of healing herbs was placed in Cú Chulainn's wounds. Bretha Crólige states that the purpose of herb-gardens is the care of the sick, and refers to the great service given by garden herbs in nursing."*[6]

Our window boxes and backyard herb gardens can be shrines to Airmid. The groves and all wild places where plants grow are her natural temples. Rites of healing, trance induction and meditation are all appropriate devotional work for this Goddess of the Green. Work to preserve wilderness areas is a form of devotion to her as well, for many medicinal plant species are still found only in the wild, or cannot be successfully cultivated.

A home altar for Airmid should be covered with a cloth, symbolizing the cloak on which she laid out the healing herbs. It can be scattered with dried or fresh plants of all types. Flowers in vases, bunches of herbs, potted plants, wreaths of branches or piles of berries could all be placed on its surface. A bowl or cauldron of spring or rain water can symbolize her well of healing and regeneration.

Incenses for her should be floral or earthy scents redolent of growth and verdant green, pine or fir resins, or the elegant sweetness of amber. If you use candles, they should be of beeswax to symbolize the fertilizing work of the bees and the curative powers of honey. If you feel a need for a blade on the altar, consider using a sickle for its close association with agricultural work, rather than an athame. Bronze, silver, stone, or wood are preferable to iron, for the folklore tells us that the dé Danann dislike iron.

Your indoor temple can be decorated with bunches of drying herbs handing from the ceiling, herbal wreaths on the walls, baskets of dried flowers, with indoor herb

gardens in pots and under sun-lamps, with bottles filled with your dried herbs, and mortars and pestles for their preparation.

If you have space in your yard for a garden, it would be highly appropriate for you to devote an area to be her special shrine and ask her blessings for the growth and preparation of your herbs. Celtic deities were often represented by a rough-hewn face in a log or by a small standing stone. With a little inspiration and some care you can create a similar stone or wooden icon for yourself. A bowl or birdbath set into the ground before the image can serve as her healing spring. Scrying and healing meditations can be done by gazing into the reflective surface of the water.

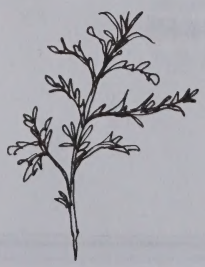
For those with some money available and a taste for something unusual, small fountains of rough natural stone can sometimes be found in garden shops. The initial cost may be a few hundred dollars, but a fountain pump runs on less electricity than it takes to run a fish tank air purifier. The musical sound of moving water can deepen meditation and provide a refuge from the distraction of everyday activities. If you are not fortunate enough to live close to a river or waterfall, this might be a useful alternative.

Inspiration is one of the roots of Celtic worship. No scripted rites are necessary for the worship of Celtic Goddesses. Poetry is their preferred form of invocation. Time spent in an herb garden or among the wildflowers could easily inspire you, as it has many poets over the centuries. Even if you are not feeling particularly inspired, there are a number of books available with samples of Celtic poetry that can be used or modified for your rituals.

"I will pluck the yarrow fair,
That more benign shall be my face,
That more warm shall be my lips,
That more chaste shall be my speech,
Be my speech the beams of the sun,
Be my lips the sap of the strawberry."[7]

Many Celtic poems exist which are centered around the harvest of particular herbs for healing or magickal purposes. The Carmina Gadelica, originally a compilation containing poetic material in both Scottish Gaelic and English translations, was recently re-released an all-English format,[8] and is a rich source that contains many plant charms and folk beliefs concerning plants, from late 19th century Scotland. Other folk poems use herbs and plants as a part of their symbolism, even if they are not directly related to the use and cultivation of healing plants. These can also be modified for use in ritual.

The triad is a traditional form of wisdom text in Celtic Ireland. One of the Irish triads speaks of the attributes of a healer, saying, "Three things that constitute a physician: a complete cure, leaving no blemish behind, a painless examination."[9] Through our work in ritual with Airmid, we can strive to fulfill these conditions. In devotion to her, we can work to heal ourselves, and, through knowledge of her herbs, those close to us as well. Through our gardens and our devotion to the green world of plants, we can move the circle outward and work to heal our planet.



Footnotes

[1] *The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilizations*, p. 514. Walter Addison Jayne, MD, University Books, New Hyde Park, NY 1962

[2] *Carmina Gadelic*, volume IV, pp. 215-217, Alexander Carmichael, Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh, 1970

[3] *Cath Maige Tuired: The Second Battle of Mag Tuired*, p. 33, ed. Elizabeth A. Gray, Irish Texts Society, Naas, 1982

[4] The Brehon laws are a traditional body of religious and secular law whose source texts are largely in the Old Irish language. Preserved by Druids and Brehons (law-givers), they were eventually absorbed and modified by the Celtic Christians, who added a great deal of Biblical material to them. Despite this, the law texts are a rich source of information on the social context of Celtic Paganism and the status of women in Celtic Ireland.

[5] *A Guide to Early Irish Law*, p. 77, Fergus Kelly, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, Dublin 1988.

[6] Ibid, pp.58-59.

[7] *Carmina Gadelica*, volume II, p. 95, Alexander Carmichael, Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh, 1972.

[8] *Carmina Gadelica*, Alexander Carmichael, Lindisfarne Press, 1992.

[9] *The Triads of Ireland*, Todd Lecture Series vol. XIII, Kuno Meyes, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin 1906.

Erynn Darkstar is a student of the Irish Celtic deities and has been a Goddess worshipper for almost a decade. She resides in Seattle and publishes books on Celtic Religion and Magick. She can be contacted at Preppie Biker Press, 7912 39th Avenue SW, Seattle, Washington. 98136

Burn the Healer

For Judith
and for myself

by Elizabeth Gray

I.
I want to call this poem
Forgive and Remember,
but I can't because that's not justice.
Almost 700 years ago,
when the moon rose full
in madness the burning began.
They say the moon
is a woman's friend
but it wasn't that night,
when the ashes piled up
like darkness.

They burned the first midwife in years
to deliver a double breech birth.
They burned the woman
who healed the priest of plague.
They burned the children
bringing herbs in from the fields;
the women who did not take ill;
the women who did not marry;
the man who stood by his wife;
they burned the woman they all envied.

I have dreamed fire,
running from house to house,
searching for an honest place to alight.
Finding none, the flames took everything.
In some villages they took every female life
from crib to deathbed.

What happens, when all of life
is a scream you can't make;
prejudice, the manacles of a torture
so prolonged that surely
some god must stop it?
They burned their healers
and the sickness raged for centuries;
a cradle, rocking itself empty.

II.
Searching for the healing in my life
I know we have lost so many spells,
the clear witchery of water
and the sleeping power of earth.
But seeds and a season and grain
does become a loaf,
given that sacred element of fire.

Grandmother,
where are your hands
to pass these gifts to mine,
the patterns to trace in oil
when I massage people's backs?
Even the simplest of healings
takes all the faith I have.
The only place I see you
is in my own lifeline,
which forks through my palm
like a lightning rod.

I want to call upon my ancestors,
those other lives of myself,
women with the daily powers of their lives,
the loom and the spindle,
the trussing twine,
the water jar, the fire.
What legends called Fates or crones
they also called evil,
as if age and power
were the greatest of sins.

III.
When I was eleven I was gang-raped.
There on stained straw
the trust of childhood
became the blood of another loss.

Part of me died.
Part of me burned.

There was never enough water to wash it away,
or to stop the burning.
For years afterward I was dumb,
had to relearn the earliest spells,
the runes of my name,
the simple spell of who I was.
It took me years to learn to love again
the fire of my own blood,
and longer to learn how to trust.

Now in my work as I press my hands into theirs
I often see scars on women's wrists,
If you know what to look for,
the signs are there,
scars like a row of crosses
on the hills of a road to the gallows.

There is no room in this world for more hatred.
There is room in my heart for more love.
I wanted to call this poem
Forgive and Remember,
but I can't because the torture goes on.

And what would I say,
to those first witches,
who could have been my mother, or myself?

That truth, too, can burn bright as silver,
the oldest coin there is.
That anger is a forge
where metal turns to fire.
I'd tell them not to worry, that we do not forget.
Tell them our light will never stop burning.

Drawings by Cheryl Frances

by Diana L. Paxson

Nora De Guadalupe: Great Mother of the Americas

At midwinter, the wind in the highlands of central Mexico blows chill. The peaks are white with snow, the world leached of color. Only a few hardy plants cling to life on the rocky hills. Birds and beasts seek shelter at that time of year, and humans do not venture far unless need impels them.

On a winter dawning in 1531, a man named Cuauhtlatohuac (Singing Eagle) in his own *Nahuatl* tongue, and Juan Diego by the Franciscan priests who had baptized him, ran along the rocky path through the hills. There was no church in his home village of Tolpetlac on the shore of Lake Texcoco, so he was going to mass at neighboring Tlaltelolco. If he was late the priests would be angry, and he did not wish to offend them, for the Spanish who had conquered his own people ten years earlier clearly had powerful magic. He wanted to pray for the health of his uncle who had raised him and was the last of his family.

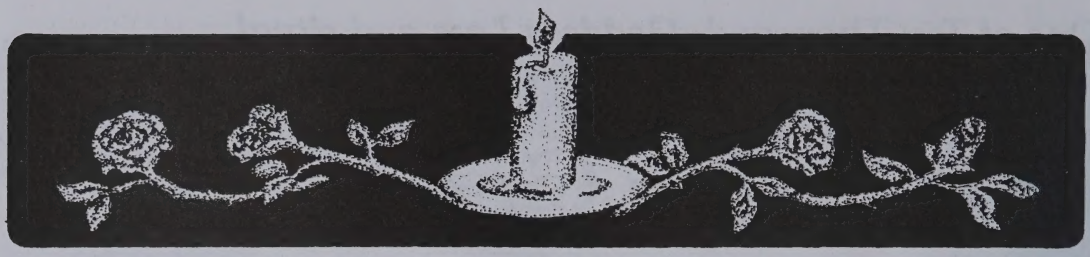
But Juan Diego did not reach the little church at Tlaltelolco that day. He was making his way along the west side of a hill, on whose summit had once stood a temple to the goddess Tonantzin, when suddenly the air rang with the song of birds. In spring, when migrating flocks fill every tree, it might have been expected; but this was the heart of winter. The music grew in rising choruses, then ended as suddenly as it had begun. While he still stood staring, a new sound struck him—his name, being called very sweetly from the top of the hill.

A mist drifted around the tumbled stones of the old temple, glowing in the first rays of the rising sun. Juan Diego climbed the hill. The mist was full of light, so radiant that everything was transformed—the rocks like precious stones, the leaves of the cactus like jewels, trunks and branches and thorns all like gold—and in that moment between day and night, he saw a girl standing there. She had the golden skin and dark hair and eyes of his own people, and she was luminously beautiful. She appeared to be young enough for him to address her as 'daughter', but her gown, rose colored and patterned with flowers, was tied back with the black cord traditionally worn by expectant mothers. Across her shoulders was draped a mantle of greenish-blue, a color used by the Aztecs for royalty or the gods, strewn with golden stars.

"*Nopiltzin, campa tiauh?*" In his own language, she asked him where he was hurrying, and he answered her. She told him then that she was the great lady, mother of the high god. The official account written in 1560, notes her exact words,

"I wish and intensely desire that in this place my teocali (temple) be erected. Here I will demonstrate, I will exhibit, I will give all my love, my help and my protection to the people. . . Here I will hear their weeping, their sorrow, and will remedy and burn away all their multiple sufferings, necessities and misfortunes."

If a church was to be built there, Juan Diego would have to give her message to the bishop in Tenochtitlan. Though the great capital was only a few miles away, Juan Diego had never been there. The fact that he had the courage to make his way to the bishop's palace in the city and to endure the ridicule and rough treatment he received from the bishop's servants, might be considered the first miracle.



The bishop appears to have been remarkably compassionate for a Spanish churchman of this time. He was Fray Juan de Zumarraga, a Franciscan who had done his best to win better treatment for the conquered Indians. When he finally learned that Juan Diego was waiting, he listened Juan's story (through an interpreter) with patience and said that he would think it over. At that first hearing, such a confusing and unlikely tale must have seemed relatively unimportant, concerned as the bishop was with the pain of the conquered and the paranoia of the conquerors in what was still a largely pagan land.

The Great Mother, however, had other ideas. By the time Juan Diego got back to the hill of Tepeyac it was sunset. Once more the radiant Lady appeared in the moment between day and night, as she had in the dawn. The old Indian tried to explain why the great folks in the capital had not immediately agreed to do her bidding and indeed were unlikely even to believe him, but she was insistent. She told him he must inform the bishop that it was the Virgin Mary who wanted a temple there, and eventually the old man agreed to try again.

This time the bishop heard him with somewhat less patience. Juan Diego's sincerity was evident, but as always with visions, one must guard against delusion. (One wonders if at this point the churchman had his doubts about the location of the proposed temple, linked as it was to the old faith of the land.) In any event, he told the old man that he must have some kind of proof of the validity of the vision before he committed resources and reputation to building a church there. Once more Juan Diego returned to the hill to report his lack of success, and this time the Lady promised that if he came to her at the next dawning he should have his sign.

But the next morning Juan Diego did not go to the hill. His uncle was dying. Juan had done all he knew for the older man and now the only thing left was to bring the priest from Tlaltelolco. Not daring to risk delay, even for a vision, this time he went around the east side of Tepeyac's hill. But the Lady is not so easily foiled. Fast as he ran, still she intercepted him.

When he started making excuses, she assured him that his uncle was already healed of his illness and therefore he had no excuse not to do as she asked. He must go to the top of the hill and fill his tilma (a long poncho of maguey fiber fabric) with the flowers he would find growing there. According to one chronicler, Beccera Tanco, this fourth apparition occurred near a spring of alum water. The spot where the image was imprinted was "at the foot of a tree of the kind the Indians call *Cuancahualt*; which is the same as the spider-web tree, or tree of prayer, which does not produce any fruit, and is a forest tree, and produces only its white blossoms in its season."

Now the vision might have been a delusion, though Juan Diego seems never to have doubted, but the flowers were undeniably real. They were out of season, furthermore, they were Castilian roses, of a species only recently brought to Mexico, which certainly did not grow wild on Tepeyac hill. But they were there, and Juan Diego gathered them.

He looped up the front of the tilma to make a container and the Lady herself arranged the flowers within it, instructing him to keep it tied up and not allow anyone to see what he held until he was facing the bishop again. However, other people could smell the roses, and it took all of the old man's stubborn determination to keep his secret until the bishop finally came out to see what was causing all the commotion.

Then Juan Diego untied his tilma, and the roses, red and pink and golden, spilled out upon the floor. But no one was looking at the flowers. Upon the coarse cloth an image had been imprinted, the image that one sees today on votive candles all over North America. Within a halo of golden rays which appear to come from behind her, the Lady stands, head a little bent and eyes gazing downward. Her gown is closed at the throat by a golden brooch with an equal-armed black cross. Her feet rest upon a dark silver crescent moon which is supported by a cherub.

Modern copies are often garishly colored. The original, its tones mellow with age but still clear after almost five hundred years, hangs above the altar of the church that was built for it on Tepeyac hill. Like the Shroud of Turin, it would appear to be a miraculous production. It has not been subjected to scientific examination, but professional artists have been unable to identify by what process it was imprinted on the cloth, since the fabric was not prepared in any way, and no brush strokes are visible.

For the Lady did get her church. When Juan Diego returned home, he found his uncle completely recovered, and as word of the strange events spread, other miracles followed. The people addressed her as; *Teotl Inantzin* or *Tonantzin*, or Mother of God, "Our Mother". When she appeared to Juan Diego's uncle, she told him that she wished her image to be called "Santa Maria de Guadalupe."

> Then Juan Diego untied his tilma, and the roses, red and pink and golden, spilled out upon the floor. But no one was looking at the flowers.

As Our Lady or Guadalupe, or whatever word it actually was that the Spaniards heard as that name, She became the patroness of Mexico, and to the end of his life, Juan Diego served her shrine.

In the years that followed, the temple that was built for the Lady on Tepeyac Hill (the first church to be placed entirely under Indian control) became a symbol of fusion between the old faith and the new. Although the story of Juan Diego's vision and the miraculous image was written down within thirty years of the event (in the *Nahuatl* language by an Aztec who had been educated by the Spanish) it is impossible to tell how much is myth and how much is history.

It is probable that the Catholic church, seeking to attract the Indians to its faith, intentionally or instinctively adopted the same policy of syncretism that had been mandated at the beginning of the Dark Ages to convert the tribes of Europe, when missionaries were directed to build their churches on the sites of the pagan shrines and temples. Inevitably, the saints these churches honored acquired the characteristics of the gods that had once been worshipped there. Long before, African slaves had preserved their own faith by identifying the *orishas* with Christian saints; the Virgins of Greek villages had appropriated the epithets of Aphrodite; and the great cathedrals of Chartres honor an image of the Mother that is probably far older than Christianity. Intererestingly enough, *Guadalupe* (River of the Wolf) is the name of a town in Spain reknowned for an ancient statue of the Mother and Child found buried nearby after the Moors had been expelled from the land.

As Ean Begg points out in *The Cult of the Black Virgin*, most of the countries of Europe have national shrines dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and in most of them, the ancient image is dark in color. The brown skin of the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe is explained as a gracious identification with the Indian people; however her garments (as portrayed in the conventional image)are European. It is possible that the Church authorities were more inclined to accept a dark-skinned Madonna because they remembered the power of the black Virgins of Europe, including the image found at the Guadalupe in Spain.

These national or local deities appear to have inherited (or continued) to exercise the ancient functions of the territorial mother goddesses who both nourished and defended their people. The Guadalupe of Mexico is a protectress very much after that pattern.

However, the image which the conventional depiction of the Virgin of Guadalupe brings most powerfully to mind is neither medieval nor Aztec, but Classical — the Roman Isis as described by Apuleius in *The Golden Ass.* The narrator, having been transformed into a donkey as a result of a youthful indiscretion, undergoes a number of adventures, growing in understanding and longing to become human once more. Finally, he finds himself on the seashore, and as he contemplates throwing himself into the sea, Isis appears. He describes her this way:

"Her garment, dyed many colors, was woven of fine flax. One part was gleaming white; another was yellow as the crocus; another was flamboyant with the red of roses. But what obsessed my gazing eyes by far the most was her pitch-black cloak that shone with a dark glow. . . Upon the embroidered edges and other the whole surface sprinkled stars were burning, and in the centre a mid-month moon breathed forth her floating beams. Lastly, a garland wholly composed of every kind of fruit and flower clung of its own accord to the fluttering border of that splendid robe. (Chapter XI)"

The correspondences between this image and that of La Guadalupe are by no means exact. Isis is crowned by a wreath, and her mantle, black, not blue, is draped according to Classical fashions. However the moon on the mantle and in her crown suggest the crescent moon upon which the Virgin of Guadalupe stands, and more important, in her garments we have the combination of a gown in red tones with fruit and flowers and a mantle like the starry sky. Furthermore, the hero of Apuleius' tale can only be transformed by eating some of the roses being carried in the procession of the goddess which is to take place the next day.

To Apuleius, who was an initiate, the name of Isis is The Goddess' 'true' name, but he recognizes that each nation addresses the great Goddess in its own way. Throughout history there has been alternating tendencies to either differentiate or syncretize divinities. Within the larger divisions of Maiden, Mother, Crone, contemporary neo-pagans generally attempt to classify the functions of different goddesses precisely. In ancient times, although the various deities had the specialities and local symbols, the major gods of each area tended to absorb the characteristics of other deities. In Egypt, Isis herself acquired the horns of Hathor and the magical power of her mother Neith as she emerged as a major goddess.

The class of territorial goddesses is particularly consistent. Whether they began as mothers or maidens, all eventually manifest the power to both nurture and protect their people. Their favor grants legitimacy to sovereigns, they don armor and ward the defenders of their land in war, and above all, they help those who need a mother's care. In each region, the form taken by the Lady, (whether in her pagan persona, or under the guise of a new religion) is defined by the native culture.

In Mexico, the Aztecs had created an empire which included tribes from the Maya to the Toltecs, much of it during the century immediately preceding the Spanish invasion. The Toltecs, who had been the first to build an empire in central Mexico, appear to have based their religion on sacrifice—of fruit and flowers, but most notably, of human beings, who often volunteered for the honor. The Aztec religion was even bloodier. Most wars were fought as much to assure a supply of captives for offerings as to gain territory. Among the major deities were *Huitzilopochtli*, Aztec god of war, and *Quetzalcoatl*, originally a Toltec and Mayan deity.

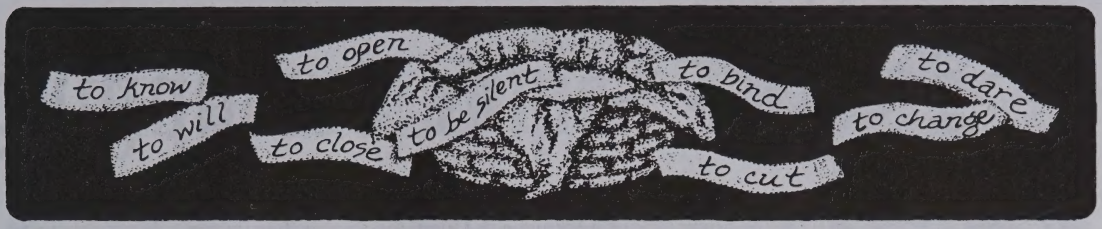
If, indeed, Tonantzin was a goddess who had survived previous conquerors, it would be natural for her to return in a new guise in the time of her people's greatest need.

Tonantzin, on whose hill the Virgin appeared, had been a minor deity in the Aztec pantheon, the Mother aspect of a group of goddesses which may have been inherited from an earlier (and less bloodthirsty) culture. Her festival was held in midwinter, when a woman dressed in white feathers and shells moved among the people. If, indeed, Tonantzin was a goddess who had already survived previous conquerors, it would be natural for her to return in a new guise in the time of her people's greatest need.

Other female divinities worshipped in the Aztec era included *Chihcomecoatl*, the corn goddess, who could appear as a maiden decked with flowers, or a young woman whose embrace was death, or a mother whose shield was the sun, and *Coatlique*, the five-fold earth goddess. She, too, was a virgin mother, who gave birth to the stars, and in some stories, to the plumed serpent and wisdom-god *Quetzalcoatl* as well. Sometimes she was considered to be a moon goddess, wife of the sun god, but folk always remembered her dark side, when she exchanged her flower wreaths for a garland of human hearts and hands, her skirt for one of winging serpents, and her feathered mantle for a human skin.

With this in mind, let us return to the much-debated question of why the Lady of Juan Diego's vision identified herself with the Virgin of a small town in Spain. The Catholics had an interest in making the vision a validation of their religion. In addition, the linguistic differences between Spanish and *Nahuatl* made it difficult for the two races to pronounce each other's languages correctly, so it is likely that the Spanish heard the strange name the old Indian said as a word they knew.

But what is Her real name? A vast number of possibilities have been suggested in the last few hundred years. Among them are: *Coatlalocpia*, from *Coatl* = serpent, *Tlaloc* = goddess, *Tlalpia* = watching over, meaning "The Goddess watching over a serpent." This was easily interpreted by Spanish as the



Lady crushing the serpent (as described in the biblical Book of Revelation). Or perhaps *Coatlallope,* "Who treads on the Snake", or *Te-coa-tla-xo-peuh,* which is usually interpreted as meaning "She who crushes the stone serpent," and which was taken as a reference to the destruction of the religion of *Quetzalcoatl.* Other possibilities include *Te-quan-tla-xo-peuh,* "She who saves us from the Devourer", and *Te-cuauh-tla-no peuh,* "She who comes from the summit of the peak," possibly a reference to *Tepeyac,* which means "The sharp summit of the hills."

That the origin of the first syllable in "Guadalupe" was the word *coatl* seems a strong possibility. Considering the amount of re-interpretation required for the Catholics to interpret an Indian goddess as the mother of Jesus, I would like to propose a little revisionism in the other direction. Versions of the story which earn a Cardinal's Imprimatur tend to assume that the serpent in question is *Quetzalcoatl,* and that by crushing him, the Lady is crushing the native religion. However, the image which appeared on Juan Diego's tilma does not show her with her foot upon a serpent. She is supported by an angel and the crescent moon, without a serpent in sight. Furthermore, although the Aztecs sacrificed men to *Quetzalcoatl* (as they did to all their gods), he was originally a wise teacher who brought peace to his people and was offered fruit and flowers.

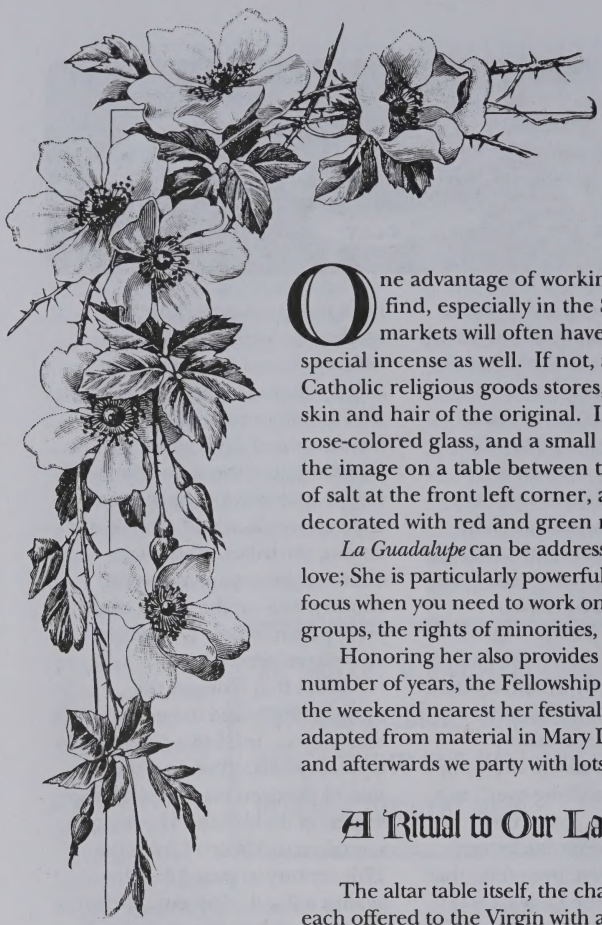
Since in some of the legends, *Coatlique* was *Quetzalcoatl's* mother, it seems to me more likely that she would be protecting him than destroying him, either as god of the more peaceful aspects of the old faith, or even as a symbol of fusion between the old and new. When Cortes first appeared, he was hailed as *Quetzalcoatl* returned. A decade after the conquest, those rumors could still have been remembered (although anyone who confused Cortes with a god of peace must have been disillusioned by then!) For the Indians, the serpent was not necessarily a symbol of evil; given the choice of "crushing" or "watching over", as a translation for the rest of the name, I would prefer the latter.

I would suggest, therefore, that the name which the Lady gave to Juan Diego's uncle was a form of that borne by the Great Mother of central Mexico, and that the temple which had formerly stood on *Tepeyac* hill had been dedicated to her under the title used for her more beneficent aspect, "our Mother," *Tonantzin.* No doubt she was old when the Toltecs came, and had survived both them and the Aztecs, adapting as needed while continuing to fulfill her ancient functions as source of life and protectress of Her people. Certainly this is the role she has played in the history of Mexico.

When the image of Guadalupe was formally installed in the new church that had been built for her, everyone, from Cortes on down, walked in the procession. Indians from many tribes gathered to celebrate, singing and dancing with words and gestures only slightly altered from their traditional form to celebrate the new incarnation of their goddess. The initial result of the apparition and new church seem to have been mass conversions and enthusiasm among the tribes. Catholic churches sprang up across the country, and on the site of almost every pagan temple a Christian church was erected.

From that time on, the miracles attributed to her were continuous. In 1544 a plague of typhus was ended when a procession of children made a pilgrimage to pray at the shrine. The image was taken to Mexico City in the 17th century to guard the city against a flood. And even though the favor of the conquerors had been required to legitimate her, Santa Maria de Guadalupe remained the protectress of Her people, saving them from flood and pestilence.

Padre Miguel Hidalgo made her banner, *La Guadalupana,* his symbol at the beginning of the Independence movement. "Long live Our Lady of Guadalupe, and long live America and death to bad government," was his warcry; eventually, simply hailing the Lady was taken as support for independence. Hidalgo led a vigorous guerilla movement, and though he was eventually executed by the Spanish, in time General Iturbide, still carrying the banner of the Lady, succeeded. Later, the treaty



Worshipping

One advantage of working with Guadalupe is that her image is relatively easy to find, especially in the Southern part of the United States. Even upscale super markets will often have glass votive candles with her image and occasionally special incense as well. If not, any rose-scented incense will do. Statues are sold in Catholic religious goods stores, although you may want to repaint them with the dark skin and hair of the original. I set up an altar for her with a statue, a votive light in a rose-colored glass, and a small incese burner on a white cloth. For group rituals, put the image on a table between two white tapers, place a chalice of water and a small dish of salt at the front left corner, and the incense at the lower right. Your athame, decorated with red and green ribbons, may also be placed there.

La Guadalupe can be addressed at any time when you need a mother's understanding love; She is particularly powerful for healing the body or soul. She is also an appropriate focus when you need to work on any problem involving relations between different ethnic groups, the rights of minorities, or the protection of North America.

Honoring her also provides a good opportunity to enjoy Mexican culture. For a number of years, the Fellowship of the Spiral Path has celebrated the feast of *Guadalupe* on the weekend nearest her festival in early December with a women-only ritual. Its content is adapted from material in Mary Devine's *Brujeria.* Everyone wears white and brings roses, and afterwards we party with lots of chocolate and Mexican food. The ritual is as follows.

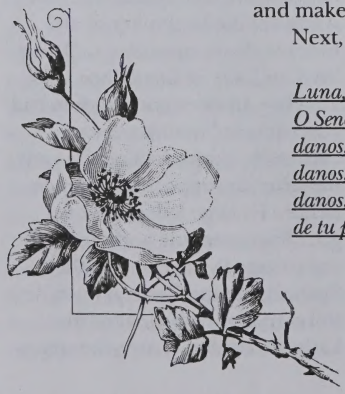
A Ritual to Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The altar table itself, the chalice of salt water, the incese, candles, and the image are each offered to the Virgin with a prayer that they may aid us, ending with the words, *Asi sea. Asi sera. Amen*, a Chicano equivalent of "So mote it be." We salute the altar by bowing thirteen times — I favor nine nods of the head and three genuflections, completed by going down on one knee.

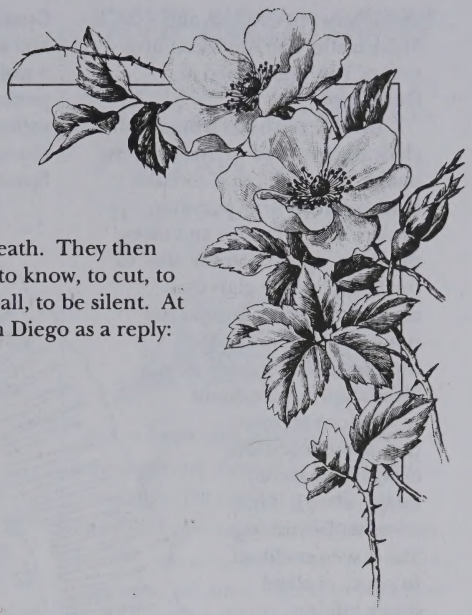
When this has been done, one of the *comadres* reads a version (such as the one given above) of the story of how the Lady appeared to Juan Diego at Tepeyac. When it is over, all when it is over, all welcome the Lady with the words, *Muy bienvenida, Senora mia. Recibe, pues, nos amor filial.* To honor Her, each woman comes forward, places a rose in one of the vases, and makes her prayer to the Lady silently or aloud.

Next, we call upon the moon power of *Guadalupe*, asking for her power and radiance:

Luna, luna, luna grande, brilla, luna de mi amor,
O Senora, Virgen nuestra, la mas poderosa; danos
danos, danos, danos,
danos, danos, danos,
danos, danos,
de tu potencia y resplendor.



La Guadalupe



Everyone visualizes the moon's radiance, drawing it in with each breath. They then meditate on the nine holy gifts which the Virgin gives to the *bruja*: to know, to cut, to bind, to change, to dare, to open, to close, to will, and the rarest of all, to be silent. At this point the Senora may read a section of the Lady's words to Juan Diego as a reply:

"Hear and let it penetrate into your heart, my dear little one:
Let nothing discourage you, nothing depress you;
Let nothing alter your heart or your countenance.
Also do not fear any illness or vexations, anxiety or pain.
Am I not here who am your Mother?
Are you not under my shadow and protection,
Am I not your fountain of life?
Are you not in the folds of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms?
Is there anything else that you need?
Let not your troubles afflict you, Be assured that all will be well."

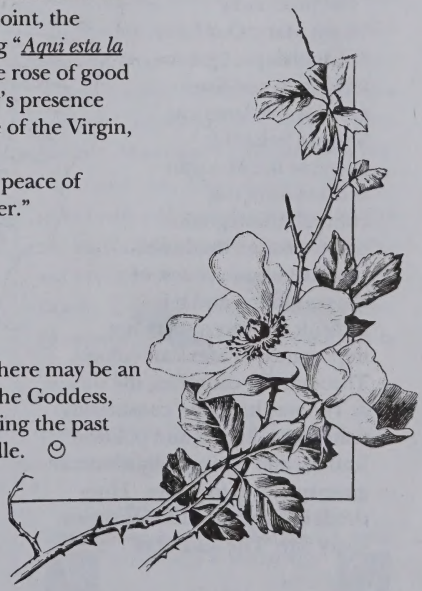
This done, we honor the lady, the Mystic Rose of *Tepeyac*, with our praise, asking that her fragrance bless our souls and that she grant her power to her daughters.

Te saludamos, te adoramos a ti,
O Guadalupe, Rosa del cielo, la Rosa Mistica del Tepeyac.
Que tue fragrancia a nuestras almas bendiga, an olorosa la mas bella rosa eres tu.
Eres tambien el poder, dalo a tus hijas, nosotras las mujeres.
Por los siglos de los siglos, bendita eres. Amen.

All visualize the lady as she appeared to Juan Diego and adore Her, and each asks the favor of the *Rosa Bermeja de la Luna*, the crimson rose of the moon. At this point, the participants some up one by one and the *Senora* gives each one a rose, saying "*Aqui esta la Rosa Suprema, la unica Rosa del Buen Amor*," (The greatest of roses, the unique rose of good love.) This rose should be kept on one's personal altar as a sign of the Lady's presence through the coming year. All state that they will honor the rose as an image of the Virgin, ending with *Asi sea. Asi sera. Amen.*

The leader ends the ritual with a blessing, bidding her sisters "go in the peace of silence, which is golden. But the moon, which is the source of power, is silver."

Idoz en paz, la paz del silencio.
Sabed que es del oro el sileno,
pues de plata es la luna, la fuente, la fuensanta del poder.
Asi sea. Asi sera. Amen.



When the ritual is done, all adjourn to the dining room for the feast. There may be an additional ceremony here, which involves lighting a white candle, praising the Goddess, and giving each one an opportunity to give thanks to her for help given during the past year. After everyone has eaten, they thank the Virgin and blow out the candle.

made between the U.S. and Mexico after the American invasion of 1847 was signed at Guadalupe.

In 1921 terrorists from an anti-clerical party tried to dynamite the image. The explosion tore out marble blocks from the altar, broke all the windows and threw the heavy crucifix on the altar to the floor, but the glass that covered the famous tilma was not even broken. Today, the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe is ubiquitous in Mexican architecture and decoration; every home has an image, even if it has no other furnishings. She is seen outlined in neon, chalked into a hillside, picked out in flowers in parks, on banners for charity campaigns conducted by movie stars in her name, on the parade capes of bullfighters, and on the medals that everyone wears.

She is hailed as "The Most Holy Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Queen of Mexico and Empress of the Americas." She has helped to preserve the Mexican Indians from the cultural disintegration that overcame the Indian populations of the rest of the continent, and it is difficult to overestimate her importance in Mexican culture. Through the centuries, the shrine at Tepeyac has been consistently visited by religious and political leaders, and honored by whatever government is in power. Hundreds of pilgrims visit Her shrine every day. The festival of Guadalupe, held between the 9th and 12th of December each year, is a major celebration, featuring performances by dancers from various Indian tribes which have changed very little since before the Spanish came. In the twentieth century, *la Guadalupe* has become a symbol of unity beyond the borders of Mexico. In 1938 a Catholic convocation held in the U.S. invoked the patronage of Our Lady of Guadalupe for all the Americas, an act which has been repeated on a number of occasions since then.

However it is not only among orthodox Catholics that the Lady is worshipped. In the villages of Mexico and the pueblos of the southwest, the Indians honor Her with marachini dances which have Spanish and Indian forms. In Pinto Park in Watsonville, California, Her image has been identified in a tree trunk which is now the regular recipient of offerings. *La Guadalupe* is the patroness of village *brujas*, who adorns Her altar with working tools from the kitchen which even the priest would not dare question.

In Chicano barrios all over the U.S., the folk-magic of Mexico has mingled with traditions from European occultism, Spiritualism, the Afro-diasporic traditions, and a bit of Wicca to produce a new *brujeria*, which despite its protective colorations, has very little to do with Christianity. In this theology, *La Guadalupe* is supreme, assisted by a constellation of aspects of the Virgin which have taken over the function of subsidiary goddesses. There are Virgins for each sign of the Zodiac; *La Purisima, La Madre de Dios*, and *Nuestra Senora de los Siete Dolores* represent the Maiden, Mother, and Crone. There are even rituals in which a *Senora* (High Priestess), works with a coven of *comadres*.

One cannot help wondering why this particular aspect of the Virgin, of all those for whom churches were established by the Spanish on the sites of the old Indian *teocalis*, should have acquired such significance. To me it

seems that the thing which most distinguishes this image of the Goddess is her all-embracing motherly care.

Like the Isis who appeared to Apuleius, whose accoutrements her own so closely resemble, the Lady of *Tepeyac* affirms her relevance for all peoples

"*I am your merciful mother, the merciful mother of all of you who live united in this land, and of all mankind, of all those who love me, of those who cry to me, of those who seek me, of those who have confidence in me.*"[2]

Furthermore, like Isis, she is inclusive. At a time when the native party had set up its patroness, *La Guadalupe*, as the foe of *Nuestra Senora de los Remedios*, the aspect favored by the Spanish party, a priest called Father Florencia preached as follows:

"*Thus Our Lady of Guadalupe teaches us that in all her Images, no matter how different they are, we must adore and venerate Herself alone, yet with respect to the divergent benefits attaching to each Image in its especial function . . . For the cult and devotion paid to one Image is also owed to the Others; and the misappraisal or lesser respect with which One is treated reflects on the Others—if we remember, as we should, their Original—which is, as it were, the Soul of both. . . they are like two arms or the two hands of this same Divine Lady, who is Mexico's guardian. With one had She controls the furies of its floods, with the other She looses the clouds so that they will bring rain in due season and fertilize Her fields.*"[2]

These are words which we all might do well to remember. For this is the paradox — that the Divine is infinitely diverse and yet its source is One.

Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe — Tonantzin — is Our Mother, the All-Mother, who despite her many names and faces remains eternally the same. Just as she takes many forms, she loves all her children, whatever their race or color. It is therefore highly appropriate for those of us who live in the melting pot of the Americas to hail her as the patron goddess of this land. ☺

Footnotes

[1]Demarest & Taylor, pp. 16-17

[2]Behrens, p. 190.

Sources

Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, trans. Jack Lindsay, University of Indiana Press, 1960.

Helen Behrens, *The Virgin and the Serpent God*, Mexico, D.F., 1966.

Jose Castillo y Pino, *Tonantzin*, Mejico, 1965

A Woman Clothed with the Sun, ed John J. Delaney, N.Y.: Image Books, 1961

Ean Begg, *The Cult of the Black Virgin*, London: Arkana, 1985

Mary V. Devine, *Brujeira*, St. Paul, Minnesota, Llewellyn Books, 1982

The Dark Virgin: The Book of Our Lady of Guadalupe, ed. nald Demarest and Coley Taylor, Freeport, Maine: Coley Taylor, Inc., 1956

Patricia Monaghan, *The Book of Goddesses and Heroines*, N.Y.: E.P. Dutton, 1981

Diana Paxson is the author of "The White Raven", and "The Wolf and The Raven", among other books; a Priestess of the Lady, and a regular contributor to SageWoman.

Cheryl Frances lives in Ashland, Oregon, where she is works in many media and is pursuing a Master's degree in Fine and Performing Arts.

Kate Cartwright works with ancient images in many media. Information about her rubber stamps is on p. 58.

FIFTH WORLD RISING

A WOMEN'S SPIRITUAL & CULTURAL CELEBRATION

♦ SUMMER SOLSTICE ♦

JUNE 17-18-19, 1994 ♦

MALIBU, CA

ALL WOMEN ARE INVITED to attend an unprecedented Summer Solstice gathering, combining the politics and celebration of women's spirituality through workshops, ritual, music, storytelling, art, crafts, drumming and dance. Within an atmosphere of nurturing sisterhood, we are committed to promoting cross-cultural understanding and respect. THE CONFERENCE CENTER, amid beautiful wooded grounds, offers private access to the beach, indoor and outdoor meeting space, indoor theater, outdoor amphitheater, heated Olympic-sized swimming pool, a variety of comfortable indoor accommodations and catered meals. Among the women offering workshops, presentations and concerts are AMYLEE, Iroquois Medicine Woman, DIANE STEIN, Reikian healer / Wiccan teacher, RUTH BARRETT, Wiccan priestess / recording artist with CYNTIA SMITH, MARGARET SLOAN-HUNTER, facilitator of UNLEARNING RACISM, performance and recording artists AVOTCJA and MATÚ, GWEN AVERY, BREN CHAMBERS and MARILYN VAN VEERSEN, ADELLA, and DONNA E, Country-Western dance teacher. Participant-generated workshops will also be offered.

FOR INFORMATION on lodging, facilities and prices, please call or write:

MESA INSTITUTE

279 LESTER AVENUE NO. 3 ♦ OAKLAND, CA 94606

510.763.9228 ♦ 619.239.4259

The Cauldron of Changes: *Transformational & practical magic*

by De-Anna Alba

I put off getting my writing done for this issue for a long time. If the truth be told, I was late in sending it off to the editor. Why? Although the Craft doesn't have much in the way of etched-in-stone dogma, a large number of Witches do hold certain values in common, and quite regularly measure their Craft sisters against those standards. If you go to any Pagan gathering at which a number of merchants are selling their wares, you will inevitably come across a button or bumper sticker which reads 'Witches Heal'. You'll also probably find at least a few herbal preparations for sale, aromatherapy bottles here and there, along with homeopathic and other alternative healing remedies. At least one, perhaps many, healing circles will probably take place during the gathering, and many of the other rituals may contain healing aspects as well. So where am I going with all of this?

I have a confession to make — I've been a Witch for twenty-two years now, and I'm not particularly interested in healing! Oh, I know the Earth needs healing, and I've participated wholeheartedly in more than a few rituals with that purpose in mind. For one thing, when deciding upon a focus for a large group ritual, particularly when working with people from a variety of traditions and skill levels, Earth healing is something everyone can agree to work on. Most other issues have controversy which can make group ritual more difficult.

I've also participated in a fairly large number of Magickal healings over the years. This usually involves

A Cautionary Note

the following elements: casting a circle, looking at a picture or hearing a detailed description of the person to be healed, deciding a color of light or healing energy to send to the person, raising power, and sending the energy to the person to be healed. This is usually called an 'absent healing'.

In many Circles I've been to, the person to be healed was right with us, and I have participated to the fullest extent of my abilities. I've combed auras, done cancer knots, surrounded the person(s) with colors and light to reduce fevers and swellings, clear up allergies and skin problems, heal backaches, headaches, colds, and lots of other ailments. AIDS and HIV sufferers are always in my thoughts and prayers. Whenever I light candles for myself at my altar, I light one for them as well.

I've even done ritual healings for pets: dogs, cats, and horses, among others. When my dog was sick and had to go through surgery and recovery, I was constantly doing Magick for her, and asked a number of my friends to do so as well. In fact, animal healing is a favorite of mine.

But the fact remains — I'm really not very interested in healing. I know a fair amount about which herbs do what and where to order seeds and potted starts. I've learned these things, not because I have a great love of healing, but in case the world/economy as we know it should ever experience major changes, and such knowledge might become necessary. I want myself, my family, and my friends who are so inclined, to be able to survive and be healthy if allopathic medicines and doctors aren't readily available. But, actually, I'm far more interested in the Magickal uses of herbs and spices than in their medicinal uses!

So, in this column, I wish to offer a cautionary note: we need to be careful in our headlong rush to heal others. For example, I know of folks who do absent healings for their sick friends and extended family members without getting their permission first. This could violate the Rede, 'an ye harm none, do as ye will,' for it is possible for an unwelcome healing to actually cause harm. There are many times this may be the case; if the sick individual would be upset by having a Witch direct energy at them, even healing energy, then harm has been caused. Or, perhaps, the illness in question has given the person much-needed time for rest. Some people feel that the only time they can put aside their work-a-day world responsibilities and pressures is when they are sick. Mothers often do not find or take time for themselves, and sickness allows them to do so to a certain extent. It's important not to assume that it is always in the person's best interest to get well as soon as possible.

If you do have the person's permission to work a Magickal healing for them, carefully consider what the appropriate action might be before you begin. For example, many people use green energy to send to sick folks. After

all, green is considered the color of spring, healing, renewal, etc. But green is also the color of growth, and sending green energy to a cancer patient might encourage the growth of the cancer. Or, another example, sending the gold or red energy of robust health to someone with a fever could drive the fever higher. Although fever can be seen as an indication that the body is fighting to drive off a contagion, causing a 'healing crisis' in an already weakened body could cause a great deal of harm.

All of this brings to mind another serious ethical issue involving healing in the Pagan community. There are lots of people out there concocting teas, tinctures, oils, lotions and potions who have very little, if any, real medical expertise. Just reading one or two books on the medicinal properties of herbs and the art of simpling does not make you a healer. If you are going to treat anybody besides yourself (or possibly, your immediate friends and family), please, take more than a passing interest in what you are doing! Anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry texts belong on the healer's bookshelf, along with the books on herbology and natural healing. There are Naturopathic schools available, with credentials and degrees that we should be availing ourselves of. Such schooling may not lead to acceptance within the ranks of allopathic medicine; but at least you, and more importantly, your patients, will know that you actually have some expertise in this area, and are not likely to make them sicker than they were to begin with.

One last note of caution — a too-general identification between Witches and healers can cause the Wiccan community harm. I know that we all have this image in our heads of the Wise Woman/Witch/Healer living in her cottage in the woods. She offers classes in herbal healing, grows her own herbs, and treats everyone for minimal fees, usually just enough to cover any expenses, and she's open to barter. Then, there's a knock at the door, and off she goes to jail for practicing medicine without a license!

In this day of wider acceptance of alternative therapies, such prosecutions seem less likely, but, in fact, such things still do happen. Right now, the Food and Drug Administration is fighting vitamin therapy, and from time to time they seek to stop the use of medicinal plants. It can do a lot of damage to our communities when such cases occur; it gives the media another chance to pass along disinformation about who and what Witches are and do. Don't give the forces of persecution fuel for their fires — be careful!

Finally, please don't assume that every Witch wants to be a healer, or even has healing as a major focus of her work. We don't all have to do it; some of us prefer to put our efforts into other areas such as Magick, psychic development, divination or Goddess research. Each of these fields, and many others, are equally valuable and welcome within the larger Pagan community. May the Goddess guide your particular path of study, whatever it may be. ☺

De-Anna Alba , a practicing Witch of 22 years, is the author of The Cauldron of Change; Myths, Mysteries and Magick of the Goddess. *She works with the Reformed Congregation of the Goddess, helping to facilitate their Priestess training program. She sits on the board of directors of the Earth Conclave, and presents information on the Craft and Paganism around the country.*

GODDESSES

The snake **Goddess of Cucuteni** (Romania, 5,000 B.C.E.) expresses regeneration, transformation and esoteric wisdom. Polished stone to resemble serpentine. 6" H. $24 - $3 S&H

Grand Adventure is committed to offering unusual and affordable museum quality recreations of the Goddess in all her phases. Each piece we make is painstakingly researched and cast in durable artstone, then hand finished to resemble the original.

Paleolithic, meso-American, Asian and contemporary Goddesses.

FREE CATALOG
Grand Adventure
RD 6 Box 6198, Stroudsburg, PA 18360

Powerful, enchanting, mystical music . . .
by Desert Wind
Kali-Ma
Dances of Transformation
Gaia, Earth Goddess
Ritual Dances of the Mother
Shekhina, Hebrew Goddess
Restoring the Balance
Return to the Goddess
In Chants and Song
Cassettes: $11.50 • CDs: $17.50
(shipping included)
Mezdulene, P.O. Box 1051-SW, Coos Bay, OR 97420

Sacred Herbs: *Gifts from the Land*

by Jan Williams *illustration by Cynthia Cunningham Baxter*

The tarot reading was a favor for a good friend. Her cousin had been diagnosed as having a tumor in the central region of her brain. My friend had told me her cousin wasn't looking for miracles, just peace. Peace that had not come when the doctors had told her that most of the tumor had been cut out and that chemotherapy had done all that was possible.

Nothing could have prepared me for the reading that I would do that morning or the lesson I would be taught by reading that page out Latisha's book of life.

Latisha had been a healer, a sociologist who had went out of her way to help people pull themselves through life crisis. She was the peacemaker in her family, a teacher in her spiritual circle, a good mother and friend. Now that she was dying, she was tired of fighting. There was nothing in her deep most self that could help her choose to heal. The pain she had endured for two years and the pain she had watched her family endure had not killed her yet, but the medicines had only prolonged the torture.

The reading had led to questions about what her doctors were referring to as hallucinations, mental aberrations. She had a constant companion of a black panther that seemed to be expecting her to follow it. I asked her what she thought it meant. She said that she felt that it was showing her a way out of this world and into the next. But also, she felt that there was so much more to do for her children and who would do those things? I had to trust my guides that what they were saying

Would you care for a peace of mind?

to her was making sense because it felt like she was better off trusting her instincts. In the end I told her she still had choices to make.

Three days later her husband found Latisha. She had died peaceably while enjoying one of her favorite activities, a bath. Her family was relieved and glad that she had not suffered in her passing. But my life had been touched and I knew that Latisha and her companion would be on my mind for quite awhile.

After I had received the news of Latisha's passing and its gift of peace, I caught a glimpse of my face in the hall mirror. The face that looked back from the mirror was suppose to be mine but I did not recognize the haggard look around my mouth. My eyes, the mirrors of my soul, had crevices and a dullness that had not been there a few weeks ago. What had happened? When had I slipped out of balance?

My Mother always told me : "If you wake up in the morning knowing that you are a whole peach pie and you go to bed with an empty pie pan, you know you gave too many pieces of yourself away." When this overwhelming hunger for comfort comes to me, I know I have to take time from healing other and claim that energy for myself. It is how I know that it is time to make myself look at where I am. So after many months of emotional stress and seemingly endless work I realized that this sense of fatigue and spiritual hunger was not going to go away until I took the time and claimed the energy to heal myself. "Healer, heal thyself."

Many women face job burn out, emotional burn out and sexual burnout because we do not set self-imposed stop signs at our crossroads. Instead, we tend to push on through until we nothing left to give, including ourselves. This article is meant to give us a chance to hear the warning bells, to look at what our souls are craving. This is a chance to let some things slide, some things fall; because these things will still be there later, I assure you, and you will much more capable to take care of them when you have relaxed, comforted yourself and fed your soul.

I am suggesting that you take a day or two for yourself. I am suggesting that you find solutions to give permission to yourself to take this time to unplug the phone, send the kids to a trusted friend or relative, and if your finances allow, to check into a cabin at a state park or even a motel (if you idea of roughing it is slow room service). The idea is that we need to take this time to reclaim our energy.

And what does this have to do with herbs? Well, there are herbs meant to be used for relaxing and rejuvenating ourselves. These are legal alteratives to tranquilizers, but like all herbs they have an effect on your body like pharmaceutical products so as in using any other 'drugs' caution should be taken.

In thinking about balance this time of the first light of spring, it is appropriate to balance ourselves for the work the Lady will require of us in the coming months. It is appropriate to come out of our darkness into that tentative light that will eventually grow along with the confidence that comes with balance.

In my first article I wrote for *Sage Woman*, I ask you to search for violet leaves and elder blossoms. In this time of balancing and first light this is a great time to combine these into a spring tonic. Place a handful of each into a jar and pour boiling water over the herbs and let steep for twenty minutes. The combination is like taking Spring Herself into your selves.

Another tea (that I make up in three ounce quantities at a time for my own use and I can suggest for those times when you are stressed) is made up of equal parts of: Siberian Motherwort, Raspberry leaves, and Lemon balm (or Chamomile). This is made in a quart jar by adding four tablespoons of tea to one quart of boiling water. Allow the herbs to steep for twenty to thirty minutes before adding sweetener. This tea can be made in advance and packed up along with the other suggestions I have for re-entry into a balance of self and soul. You sip a cool cup slowly taking its substance into all of your bodies and allow these herbal helpers to do their job.

The next natural rejuvenator to tackle is the largest organ of our bodies—our skin. We are going to make a natural scrub that will bring circulation and slough off the dead and tired skins cells and will allow us to replace and rejuvenate ourselves. This is a very simple one involving one cup of cornmeal and a cup of oatmeal tied in a piece of cheesecloth. As you step into the shower, scrub yourself from head to toe.

Now we are going to make a wonderful moisturizer. The ingredients are a bottle of avocado oil and a teaspoon of lavender oil and a teaspoon of rosemary oil. This can be used by the capful in a steaming bath or as a massage oil. It is relaxing and makes your skin feel supple and promotes healthy cell growth as avocado oil contains large amounts of vitamin E.

If you opt for the steaming bath a wonderful facial is honey and egg whites. Just combine a tablespoon of honey with an egg white and plaster it on your face and neck. This simple combination cleanses your pores and removes dirt you didn't even know was there. So as you relax in your bath imagine all of your troubles, all of your overexpectations, all of your imaginary and real troubles floating away until your body is cleansed and you are ready for to take the next step in recreating balance in your second body, your soul.

In this time out for yourself comfort foods are important. These foods may not necessarily be 'health foods'. A lot of comfort foods are derived from our childhoods. For instance, stormy weather puts me in mind of oven-toasted cinnamon and sugar buttered toast and hot chocolate. But one of the most universally reported comfort foods of our age is pasta. Chocolate, of course, is in a league of its own. Nothing beats chocolate to blunt the edge of a full blown PMS episode!

The important thing to remember is to eat foods that will make you feel good about what you are doing to regain yourself.

Many esoteric traditions speak of our bodies having basically two reservoirs of energy. The larger of the two is our 'walking around' body. We feed it fuel in the form of food. We give it water to keep our fluids circulating. And we breathe in air to fuel our lungs and voices. If we deplete its energy, a couple of good meals and a good night's sleep and we'll be okay. It is from this larger reservoir's experiences that we feed our smaller reservoir. If we deplete our smaller reservoir it is not so simple to refuel. The

feeling is similar to having the air knocked out of us; it is very difficult to reinflate our lungs. This smaller reservoir requires finer foods, different fluids, and different air. This smaller reservoir is the generator of our souls.

If we deplete the reservoir of our souls we experience diseases. Some of us starve to death looking for that perfect spiritual fuel. Some others of us drown in our own tears waiting for someone to relieve our grief and loneliness. And yet others of us are smothered trying to breath the pollution of other souls and their voices. In this world that we collectively call reality, all of these are mental illnesses.

In Modern Western Traditions, we have many complicated ways to try and refill our reservoirs. But it is ultimately in Silence that we hear our soul's voice and understand our purpose and path.

In taking care of ourselves aromatherapy is a useful and portable tool especially when it is a matter of achieving and maintaining the balance between body and soul. Magical and ritual oils are a way of obtaining a balance. But it is important to understand that the use of an oil is what makes it magical or ritualistic.

In balancing ourselves we can concoct blends of oils that will help us cope with different stressful situations. For instance some smells are naturally comforting and can be used as keys to unlock our stress. Clay sage, lemon, peppermint, rose, honeysuckle these are comforting. Rose and lemon balance out well and give you a feeling of self confidence. By combining a pleasing scent and adding it to Epsom salts we can not only balance our inner body but ground our outer body.

Lastly a very important tool to bring with you on your inner excursion is your sense of humor. Bring along humorous books or rent your favorite comedy. This is the time to clean out the attic's cobwebs of worries and laughter is the perfect cure for melancholy.

This is the time for enjoyment, for blessing ways, for healthy thoughts. Claim your power, Sisters and rejoice in Her light. ☺

Suggested readings

Aromatherapy from A-Z, Patricia Davis ISBN 0 85207 185X, C.W. Daniel Company Limited. This is a wonderful reference book on oils and their uses. It is so useful I own two copies so that it is within easy reach.

Momilies As My Mother Used to Say, Michele Slung, ISBN 0 345 322894, Ballentine Books . This book will make laugh at yourself and bring up memories that you haven't looked at in years.

Sources

I know many wonderful herbalists advertise in *Sage Woman* and certainly they deserve our support. However, Siberian Motherwort is sometimes difficult to find. Therefore I would like to share with you two of my favorite sources for oils and herbs:

Medicine Flower
P.O. Box 231011
Encinitas, Ca 92023
1-800-pure oil

The Herb Closet
Osaaanyin Herb Cooperative
104 Main Street, 2nd floor
Montpelier, VT 05602
1-800-998-7099

Your complete Magical Aromatherapy supplier!

Kamala Perfumes

Look for us at the Colorado Renaissance Festival Bristol Renaissance Faire and the Ohio Renaissance Festival!

- over 80 different essential oils
- over 100 different dried herbs
- ritual and astrological oils
- 100% beeswax candles
- liquid castile soaps
- massage oils
- bath salts
- incense
- lotions

For catalogue send $1.00 to:
Kamala Perfumes
206 N. Randolph
Champaign, IL 61820
(217)355-1687

Crone-alogue: *Ageless Wisdom*

by Laura Janesdaughter and Judith Tolley *illustration by Misha*

The Crone Books: a work-in-progress

The second meeting of the Crones was focused on the making of our Crone Books, the receptacles of Crone Wisdom. These books would contain not only our own personal crone wisdom but also those things shared by the other Crones from their books. We started out with several ideas of what kind of things would be included: family recipes, writings which emphasized the positive aspects of Cronehood, poems and words of power, pictures and cartoons, practical information such as where we did our candle, herb and bead shopping, personal memorabilia, the recordings of insights and discoveries. Anything we wanted.

We envisioned the Crone Book as a work-in-progress which would be added to throughout the year and beyond. Why stop with this year? Why not more and more Crone Books, overflowing with Crone Wisdom and the Crone point of view? We saw the books becoming family treasures to share and pass down through the years, with each family member adding their own piece of wisdom or insight. It would be like the ancient Grimoire, the mysterious books of secrets passed down from century to century, witch to witch, the repository of the ageless wisdom of women.

We met in a recreation center where there were lots of tables, and space for everyone to spread out their work. Our goal for the evening was to transform three-ring binders into Crone Books by decorating their covers. We had asked people to bring various supplies: a three-ring binder, photos, paper images, glitter, glue, paints, scissors, ribbon, any kind of 'thing' which could be applied or used as collage. In addition, several women brought things to share: rubber stamps, wrapping paper, museum and other catalogs with goddess images, colored paper from left-over flyers, and other craft supplies. It was now up to each woman to draw on her inspiration to create from this colorful bounty a cover for her own personal Crone Book.

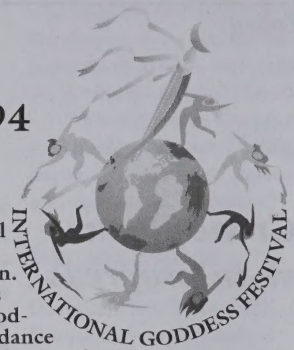
To facilitate the process of getting in touch with the Crone Muses, we smudged our work area, and, in fact, we burned incense all night, as several women had been studying herb lore and made Crone Incense for us. We called in the corners, asking for insight into ourselves as we sought to create images which we could grow into or from which we could find new understanding of the self in transformation. We went around the group and each said why we were here and acknowledged ourselves as Crones. Then we settled down to have fun and be playful in our task! There was music and much conversation as women shared supplies and information about themselves. We munched on cookies and chips and dip; passed water and punch to each other. We rested, watched, strolled around and looked at the work of others, exchanging ideas and offering suggestions. It was a time for Crone community building as we gathered our materials and cut and pasted our covers.

At one point in the evening a woman told us stories about Native American ancestors as we sat and worked in silence. Thus, we shifted from the outer world of women to the inner world of image and myth. We opened up a place for the right brain to enter and manifest its voice.

As each woman channeled images for a personal mythology, she was also connected to the past and to the experience of those who have gone before her. [Readings from *Women Who Run with the Wolves by Clarissa Pinoka Estes* (especially 'La Loba') and *Mysteries of the Dark Moon* by Demetra George, would be perfect for this as both books are rich with Crone images, Crone Goddesses, and stories about he cycles of a woman's life.]

We ended the workshop by sharing our creations and explaining our intent by the symbols we had chosen to decorate our books. Many women spoke of establishing an identity separate from their worldly image, or setting forth affirmations for what they would like to bring into their lives and

Santa Cruz, Full Moon May 19-22, 1994

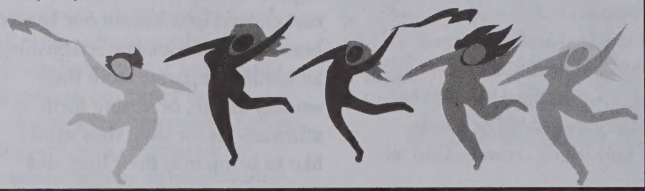


Plan ahead and join us at the International Women's Spirituality/cultural/musical gathering to lift up our souls together under the Full Moon. The redwood forest offers its magic to give ritual to the Goddess and share the May Pole dance with many women from other countries We will have provocative spiritual / political workshops, make ocean visits / purification's, at camp enjoy a good sized swimming pool, rope course, hiking trails. At night we'll prepare for a high ritual, followed by outstanding concerts by women artists.

Confirmed teachers so far: Monica Sjoo, (UK) author of the Great Cosmic Mother, Janet McCloud (Native Americans responding to Women's Spirituality, their own story) Judy Grahn poet, will read us her work at the fire circle, Cosi Fabian (UK) will speak about Sexuality of the Goddess, Shekenah Mountainwater priestess elder author of The Thread of Ariadne, Maria Belkys will give a presentation on Black Women's Goddess, Zsuzsanna Budapest priestess elder, author Grandmother of Time, Grandmother Moon, Goddess in The Office and keynote speaker. Music will be performed by Ruthie Barrett, (her tapes include Aeolis, Invocation To Free Women, Parthenogenesis, etc.) Cynthia Smith her partner in concerts on dulcimer and Gwen Jones (Raindreaming). We ask women to bring their instruments to the festival so we can make our own music.

Terry Sengraff (Women Walking Tall, movement an stilt work) will teach us movement. Tradeswomen of appropriate Goddess ware are welcome. There will be time to just hang out and enjoy communion with nature. Early registration (the first 150 women) gets us exclusivity on the 450 acres of wilderness, please do this as soon as you can. Tickets include good food and cabins, or camping all the workshops and events. Airport pickup is Free for "out of continent travelers, extra $25 San Jose and $35 San Francisco for those of us on this continent.

Tickets bought in 1994 - $400
Checks made payable to Women's Spirituality Forum,
P.O. Box 11363, Oakland, CA 94611
or call our Goddess FAX /Hotline with your questions:
(510)444-7724.



personalities. They could see the books becoming cherished messengers for their children and friends, something they could share and pass on that would explain who they are and how they felt. And so the Second Crone Gathering ended.

We asked in the succeeding months for the Crones to submit things to be shared with the other Crones. The first month was recipes and other wisdom handed down in our families; the stories that came with them were an important part of the sharing. (See 'Chocolate Intrigue', 'Bernie's Vegetarian Lasagne', and 'Words of Wisdom'.) Over the next months we shared shopping wisdom, Crone stories, etc. Our Crone Books began to fill up, and, in several cases, have now grown into multiple volumes.

The Mother of the Crone Books

At the public Crone Ritual later in the year, the Crones presented a special Crone Book to Marilyn Spivey, the 'Mother' of the Crone Books. We asked her to recollect for this article her thoughts, and received these words, which are well worth being in anywoman's Crone Book.

"One day, I overheard a group of women talking about their prize recipes and I thought about the wonderful Russian Easter Cookie recipe I have. It was handed down to me over 30 years ago when I was only 19 by my then mother-in-law, a little Russian Crone of 85. She told me the story of how it had been handed down, generation after generation, and how she had learned it as a small girl from her grandmother in Russia. I cried because I didn't have anyone to pass it on to. Years later, when Laura and I first

started to develop our ideas for the Crone Gatherings, I remembered it.

I am breaking new ground for myself in learning about the Craft and I thought how wonderful it would have been to have learned from my mother and grandmother. This, to me, was something else we need to reclaim. It is not enough to call myself a Crone — it is my duty to pass on the knowledge I have gained in my years of living, even something as seemingly small as a cookie recipe. I tried to think of how to pass on our legacy. I wanted more than a journal, I wanted a collection of what I am. When I thought of the Crone Book, I was afraid everyone would think it was a dumb idea; to make it worse, when I shared my idea, and the story behind it, I cried. No one thought it was dumb; everyone understood and shared my dream. The only problem has been that we each thought we didn't have anything really worth sharing.

At each Gathering, we asked everyone to write down something about a specific subject. We started out by collecting recipes that had been handed down in the family. I would put them all together and we would share our knowledge at the next Gathering. We were all surprised at our collective knowledge and our books grew. We all came up with different subjects and we collected information on where we shop for magickal supplies, books to read, ways to use herbs, our favorite chants, and so on.

Once we each had something in our books we found it was easier to find other things we wanted to add. Sometimes it was an article from the newspaper; a picture a child had drawn; a poem we had written. Many of the Crone Books are now into their second and third volumes.

The Crone Books started out as just a group of three ring binders, but they became a reflection of the life of each of us. No two books are alike now; somewhere they stopped being a collective and became a one. Even if no one ever sees our book it taught us to value our knowledge and know the 'Pride of being a Crone'. Hopefully, we have reclaimed the tradition of passing on our knowledge to our children and grandchildren. For my part, knowing that my Russian Cookie recipe will not end with me, makes my cry again, but this time with joy, not with sorrow."

Thus, the Crone Books, even in their inception, became a container for discovery of the self and the recollections of the past, a way to organize beliefs, a statement of being, a declaration of worth. We honor them for they are sacred tools for recording transformation and for reclaiming Crone wisdom. ☺

Judy Tolley and Laura Janesdaughter live in Long Beach, CA, where they work with Long Beach Womanspirit, a community of women who coordinate and sponsor Goddess awareness events such as as craft fairs, study groups, workshops and seminars.

Pages from the Book of Crones . . .

Chocolate Intrigue

This is a recipe from my mother Eileen. I choose it because of the memories it represents. My mother worked very hard to support us (I am the youngest of 4). I look back now and wonder how she ever had the time or energy to do everything that she did. To me, it was always a big treat when she would bake. She knew how much I loved cooking and would always let me help her. This cake was always one of my favorites because it had the element of surprise . . . or should I say 'intrigue'? Its name moves from the fact that on the outside it looks like a vanilla cake, but when you cut into it, there is a big swirl of chocolate cake on the inside. As a child, I was convinced that my mother had worked the most amazing magic possible.

Preheat oven at 350 degrees.
Sift together:

- 3 cup sifted flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt

Cream together 1 cup butter or margarine then gradually add 2 cup sugar, then blend in 3 eggs.
Combine 1 cup milk, 1 1/2 tsp vanilla.
Mix all ingredients:
First add the combined ingredients to the creamed ingredients and mix well; next add the dry to that and mix well again. Turn 2/3 of the batter into a well-greased and lightly floured pan.
Add to the remaining batter:

- 3/4 cup chocolate syrup
- 1/4 tsp. baking powder.

Spoon chocolate batter gently over vanilla batter in pan. DO NOT MIX!
Bake for 60-70 minutes depending on pan and size.

— Patsy

Bernie's Vegetarian Lasagna

This was my Mother's recipe, and she was the greatest cook I'd ever met. It was a difficult thing for me to pull it out and copy it over from her handwriting, but it was a sweet pain. She died a few years ago and it's still sometimes as fresh as yesterday.

Tomato Sauce:

- 20 oz. tomato paste
- 2-3 cloves garlic (crushed)
- 1 tsp. oregano
- 3 stalks celery (chopped)
- 1/2 med onion (chopped finely)
- 1 lb. TVP or vegetable burgers
- 1 c. mushrooms (chopped)

Cheese Mixture:

- 16 oz. cottage cheese or ricotta cheese
- 8 oz. shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper
- 1 T. parsley flakes
- 1 T. parmesan cheese (if desired)

Mix together and set aside.
Cook lasagna pasta until barely tender, about 5 minutes. Let cool.
Line bottom of 12 x 6 baking dish with pasta, then add tomato sauce, more pasta, cheese mixture, pasta, etc. until the pan is full, making sure to layer noodles on top. Bake in 350 degree oven for 30 to 45 minutes, covered. Let cool slightly and serve with garlic toast and salad.

—Elspeth

Words of Wisdom

I have given some thought to our 'assignment' this month (to find an heirloom saying or object or recipe to begin the Crone Book with) and have found it very difficult. Although I inherited a few tangible 'things' from my mother when she died, the 'wisdom' that she passed on ran to just this:

1. Always wear a clean slip in case you are in an auto accident.
2. Don't hold your face like that, it will freeze that way.
3. Eat everything on your plate, there are people starving in China.

Not exactly what I would want to pass on! The result of the above 'wisdom' has been:

1. When I was in an auto accident, before I even assessed my injuries, I thought — you guessed it! I have since given up wearing slips altogether.

continued from page 44

2. Whenever I get mad, I still make faces. And my face has never frozen that way.

3. I have a weight problem because I not only eat everything on my plate, but everything on my children's plates, too.

So, I have been thinking about what I would like to pass down. There's so much! As a midwife, I would want to pass on the reverence that I feel at the miracle of human reproduction, and the awe inspired by the culmination of that process. As a Witch, I would want to pass on my love for the Goddess and the God, and all that they embody. But to impart all that I would want to impart on these subjects would require volumes.

So then I thought of all the women who have inspired me, taught me, guided me over the years, and it is this that I wish to share with you. There is not space to write about each one, so I will simply list them in the hope that any that are unfamiliar to you, will take the time to look up the next time that you are in a library. In this way, I share my wisdom with you.

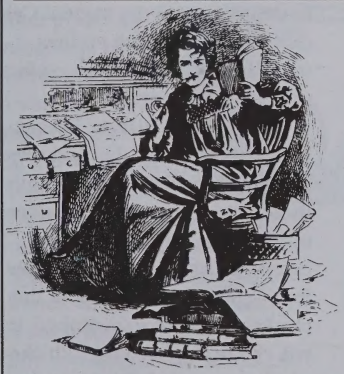
—Lani J. Rosenburger

The Historical List

Eve, Hrothvitah, Theresa of Avila, Hildegard of Bingen, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Anne Boleyn, Lady Jane Seymour, Queen Elizabeth I, Mary, Queen of Scots, Mary Wolstonecraft Shelley, Abigail Adams, Sojourner Truth, Harriette Tubman, Margaret Sanger, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, George Sand, Louisa May Alcott, Margaret Chase Smith, Margaret Bourke White, Eleanor Roosevelt, Leontyne Price, Jessye Norman, Nikki Giovanni, Maya Angelou, Gloria Steinem, Jane Fonda, Mother Theresa, Whoopi Goldberg, and Anonymous.

The Personal List

Patty Tratt (HS music teacher), Mme. Munya Chernaivsky (voice teacher), Sylva Blackstone (friend), Holly Flagg (friend, birth attendant), Rose Orenstein (friend, therapist), Toni Smith (friend for 30+ years), Kathryn Powers (friend, Shamanka), Diana McCaul (friend, Priestess), Caroline Burnside (friend, MFCC), Jane Eldridge (voice teacher), Mary Jackson (friend, midwife), Kami Seymour (friend, midwife), Mom Brooks (husband's grandmother), Nancy Westley (friend), Maggie Bennett (friend, midwife), and all the Mothers whose babies I've caught.



FACT *Overall, women write 27% of front-page articles in major newspapers in the United States.*
FACT *Only 11% of first-page news stories are dedicated to women's lives.*

FED UP ?
Then look at ON THE ISSUES, a quarterly magazine filled with in-depth political analysis and book, music and film reviews, all from a progressive, feminist viewpoint.

You'll like our women centered brand of investigative reporting alongside provocative interviews with women well known and unknown, and astute, savvy commentary on the ever-changing landscape of movements for social change.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

❑**BILL ME** ❑**CHECK ENCLOSED**

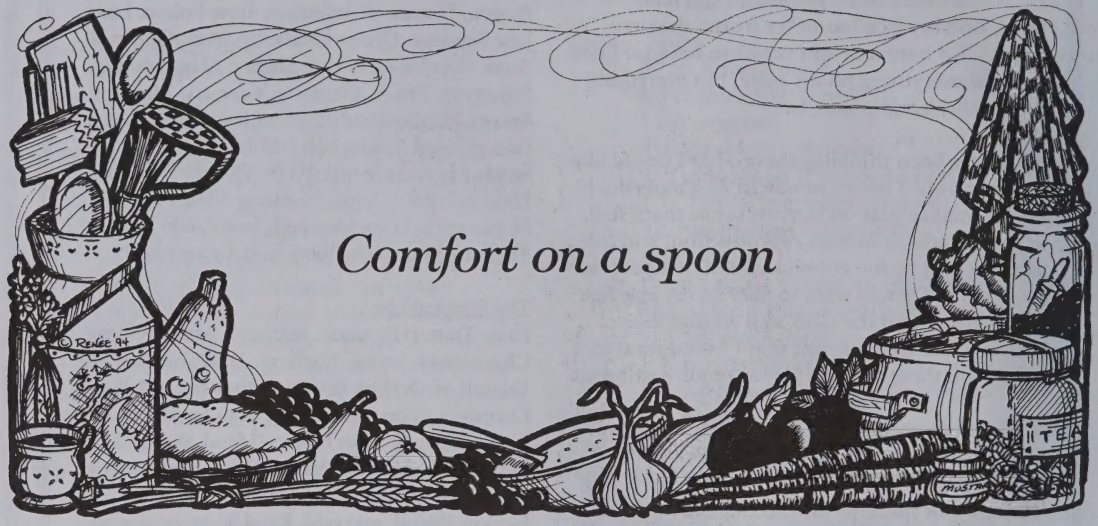
❑2 Years (8 issues), $25.75
❑1 Year (4 issues), $14.75
❑Institutional rate: 2 Years, $30.75
❑Institutional Rate: 1 Year, $24.75

Send to: ON THE ISSUES
P.O. Box, 3000, Dept. OTI
Denville, NJ 07834

For a Sample Copy Send $3 to:
On the Issues, 97-77 Queens Blvd.
Forest Hills, NY 11374

ON THE ISSUES

by Lunaea Weatherstone *illustrations by Rénee Christine Yates*



Heal my body, heal my soul,
Goddess, Goddess,
Keep me whole!

Shekinah Mountainwater's chant simply and beautifully illustrates the unbreakable connection between the physical and spiritual self. If you're feeling yucky, chances are your spiritual practice goes out the window. And conversely, if you are feeling in need of soul healing, you may neglect your body, as we sometimes do when we're depressed or stressed. To be whole, we need to look at both parts of the self, and attend to those first chakra survival needs as we tend to our seventh chakra metaphysical needs.

Which brings me to . . . chicken soup.

[Let's get one thing out of the way right up front. I completely trust the ability of my non-chicken-eating sisters to find what serves them in this article. Or to gently turn the page. Blessings to you all.]

What is it about chicken soup that makes it a metaphor for healing? The soup itself is good, and good for you, of course, but what else? I think it must be the image of being tucked up warm in your bed and having your mommy come in with a steaming bowl on a tray; the image of being cared for. When we make soup for our loved ones — or for ourselves — we embody that nurturing 'ideal mommy'. And we all know who Mommy is, don't we?

The change of seasons often brings on the release of toxins in the body and spring is the classic cold season. But even if you have escaped the clutches of the drippy nose elves, there will inevitably come a day when you need to be snug in your bed and have some soup on a tray. Sooner or later, body and/or soul demand time out. So, let's make chicken soup!

First, the pot. A good soup pot is a lovely thing to have. Deep and round and devoted to bringing forth delicious comfort on a spoon, the soup pot is your cauldron. Run your hands over its smooth contours, and charge it as a vessel for delivering healing of body and soul to all who eat from its depths, just as the ancient Celtic cauldron from which endless streams of divine food issued forth to all who hungered.

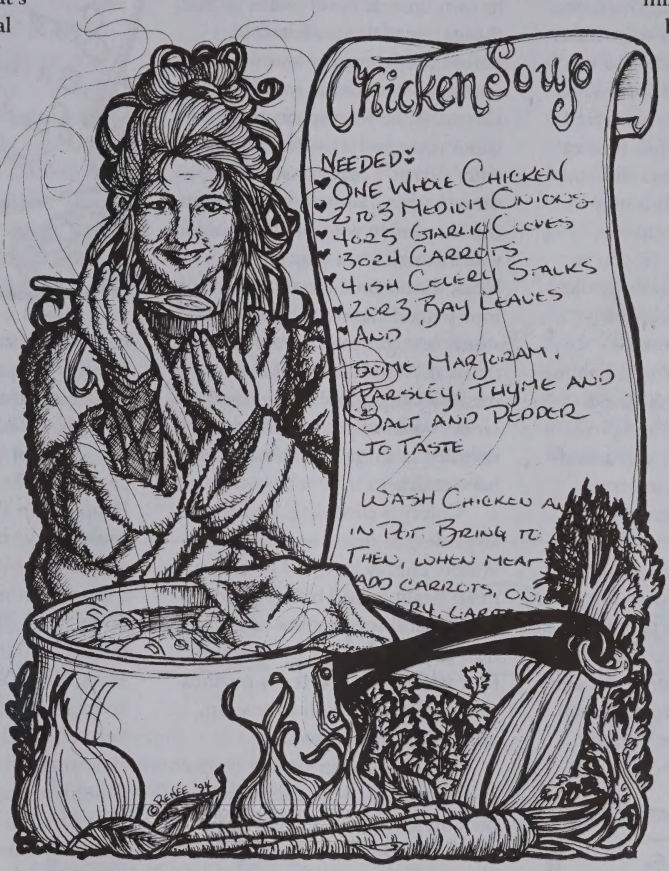
Next, get a chicken. [Vegetarian sisters may skip the next several paragraphs and move straight to those luscious vegetables. Sauteed mushrooms, lentils, and other beans can make a nice substitute for the protein and flavor of the chicken if you're so inclined.] If you can find a free range chicken which presumably lived a happy life before being made into soup material, all the better. In any case, get a whole chicken, not just the parts. When eating meat, it's a good idea to take a good look at what (or some would say, who) you are eating, thank it, bless it, honor

it and respect it. It's much easier to recognize a chicken as a once-living being when you see it all in one piece, rather than as little semi-idenifiable parts. It's hard sometimes to face the bloodier side of eating meat, but that's part of being an ethical and aware member of the Earth community. If you are going to be upstream in the food chain from your chicken-sister, at least look her in the beak when you do it, and say thank you.

Wash your chicken thoroughly, and with a final pat, gently settle her in your cauldron. You now have a chicken in every pot. What abundance! This symbol of prosperity, and ability to feed hunger is universal. Offer another prayer of thanksgiving. Now, cover your chicken with water, preferably spring water. Bring the water to a boil, then reduce the heat and let it simmer uncovered for an hour or two.

When the meat is dropping off the bones, and the chicken comes apart when you try to lift it from the pot, you can remove it and strain out any little suspicious items. Let the chicken cool in a bowl while you tend to the broth. At this point you will need two more magickal tools: the knife and the spoon.

The knife as an altar tool has sometimes been rejected by progressive and feminist witches as a symbol of patriarchal violence and strife. But for me, the blade is reclaimed from its troubled history as a symbol of integration. By cutting things into manageable bits, you allow them to mingle together into a cohesive whole. If you drop an entire carrot into your soup, who gets it? One lucky carrot-eater. But cut it up, disperse its healing energy, and *voila*! Carrots for everybody! (By sure to have a really sharp blade. The skilled word mistress uses the minimum amount of force needed for her aims, and thus avoids cutting off her little finger in the process!)



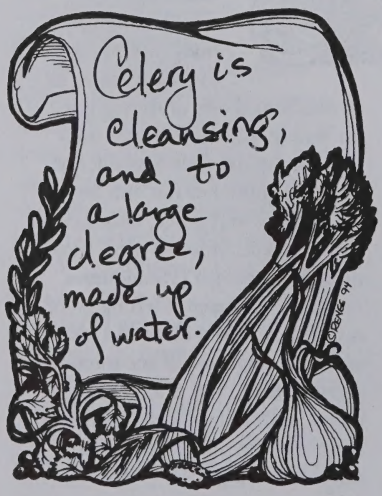
The spoon, ah, the spoon! My favorite personal power tool (if you don't count vibrators). . . and the spoonish metaphors are endless. The spoon is what keeps things moving and mixing. It keeps the mixture integrated, brings up hidden treasures from the depths, skims off what is no longer needed from the top. Round and concave, a tiny cauldron in your hand, the spoon also serves as a magic mirror if you turn it over and gaze into its convex backside. Take a good look at yourself in the magic spoon. Are you doing all you can to hasten your own healing and the healing of those around you? Speak your intentions into the bowl of the spoon and stir spells into the soup as you tend your cauldron.

Healing your body involves paying attention to all its needs, and one of its needs is for sensual pleasure. So, we want our soup to not only *be* good, but also *taste* good. For me, this begins with onions and garlic. Onions are a most magical food — well, show me a food that isn't! Sometimes healing is a matter of letting go of our preconceived ideas and habits, and a peeling away of accumulated sorrows, fears, and griefs. The onion, with its layers and tears, is a symbol of the pure strength of inner searching.

Hold the whole onion in your hand, bless and charge it, and then cut horizontally through its equator. Rings descend into its center, like Inanna moving through the gates on her descent to the underworld. Slice the onion into thin crescents and offer them to the cauldron. I usually use two of three medium-sized onions.

Now comes the garlic, sacred to Hecate. Peel and crush four or five cloves of garlic, and offer them to your brothy brew. This may sound like a lot, but, trust me, you'll be glad you did. (If you're really sick, and crazy about garlic, too, you can even increase this amount, up to ten or twelve cloves!) Long known for its healing properties, garlic lowers blood pressure, stimulates healing in every part of the body, and assimilates through the system very quickly, remaining there a long time to continue your healing. All this while keeping away vampires!

Let's think about that. Do you know any vampires? Is there anyone in your life who sucks off energy you vitally need? Let's send those people some love and drop an extra clove of garlic into the poet to release ourselves — and



them — from that unhealthy servitude.

Carrots, and all root foods, teach us about ripening in solitude and darkness, about the need to go underground and let growth take its own time. It never works to pull things out of the underworld before they're ready, and that applies to humans as well as carrots. Take your space, and rest when you need to — learn from sister carrot! Carrots last a long time in your pantry, and represent the 'staples' in your life that sustain you through what may seem a bleak winter time. So slice three or four peeled carrots carefully into sunny orange rounds. As you cut, thank the Mother for all the mysteries that grow in the dark Underworld of your spirit, to be revealed as bright and healthy at harvest time.

Celery is cleansing, and is to a large degree made up of water. Watery energy is restful when you need healing, and brings peace and dreaminess, a sense of rightness in your world. Cut up about four stalks and let celery's purification begin to work in your soup, and ultimately, on you.

Next, take your cooled chicken gently in your hands and slowly pick off all the meat, adding it to the broth. Don't be squeamish about this; it's important to interact with food that is meant for healing; it's your energy that brings all this goodness to life, after all. Give the bones and skin of the chicken to your favorite familiar, and come back to stir, stir, stir.

Now comes the most magical part of your healing potion: herbs. Adding herbs in the last half hour or so of cooking allows them to release their essences without becoming bitter. I've found that they don't lose any of their good-

ness on the second, third, or even fourth reheating if you cook them gently at the start. Magically, this probably holds true as well.

Our first herb for this brew is laurel, also known as bay leaves. Drop two or three leaves into your cauldron, and ask Athena to send you victory over all that keeps you from achieving health of mind and body. Next, make an offering of thyme, sacred to both Venus and Mars, for balance, strength, and courage. Thyme is not only beloved of fairies, but was used in cleansing Greek temples, so it should be auspicious for cleansing your physical temple.

Marjoram has been used for centuries as a spring tonic, to enliven and cheer. "Good for those who are given to overmuch sighing," says one 1597 herbal. So, add a handful, and smile, don't sigh. Parsley, sacred to Persephone, is an ancient offering to the dead, as well as to their Queen. Honor your ancestors and ask for their healing blessings by adding some finely chopped fresh parsley to your soup. Continue celery's watery magic by adding a dash of celery seed, which was reportedly eaten

by witches to keep them from falling off their brooms! Invoke, with celery seed, the qualities of balance and witchy wisdom; invite them into your soup, and your life!

Black pepper comes next. Use whole peppercorns, for their element of surprise. When you bite into a peppercorn, it brings you instantly back to awareness. Pepper says, "Wake up! Life holds surprises for you, you can still feel, even if you feel bad! You're alive!" (Note: you may want to use less pepper if you are making this soup for a family with children — their lives are full of surprise as it is!)

Finally, add salt, sacred symbol of life itself, of birth waters and the blood the binds us and unites us. Salt is also from the ocean, mother of all life. As you pour it into your hand or pinch it up from a container, feel your connection to all life. Salt also is a wonderful purifier; as you offer the salt to your cauldron, envision it cleansing you as you would clear a crystal by placing it in salt water.

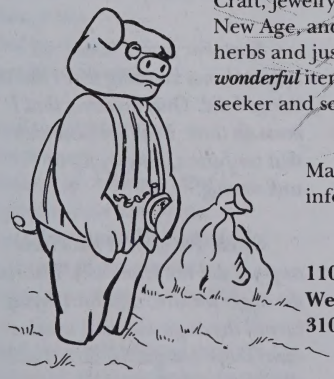
It is time to sing, chant, or incant over your brew. Stir it in spirals, circles, symbols of magic and power. In some Wiccan traditions, stirring clockwise (deosil) is invoking, bringing energy in, while counterclockwise (widdershins) is dispersing, sending energy away. Your intention is what matters most; stir in the way that feels right to you. Breathe over the waters, and move them to life. Envision your healing, the healing of all who will share in this soup. Imagine a world in which all who hunger are fed fully. Give thanks for your own blessed abundance, that you may give healing to yourself, and receive it gratefully.

At this point, I recommend putting a lid on your cauldron, both literally and metaphorically, and snuggling down for a nice nap or perhaps a hot bath. When you finish, shuffle out to the kitchen, your Witch's cottage redolent of the scent of homemade Mother-love. Don't you feel better already? Now eat up your soup like a good girl . . . Mommy's right here. ☺

Lunaea Weatherstone is the former editor and publisher of SageWoman; Rénee Yates is a Goddess artist and former contributor to SageWoman as well. We are happy to welcome them back to our pages.

Procurer of The Obscure

A very friendly mail order company and so much ***more***! Special orders and questions are always welcome too! Our catalog features items of interest like: Tools & Books of The Craft, jewelry and gifts, networking, New Age, and rare books too. We offer herbs and just a whole lot of Magickal, ***wonderful*** items & services for the new seeker and scholars as well!



Mail $5.00 for your information & catalog to:

11002 Massachusetts Ave.
Westwood, CA 90025-3510
310. 575. 3717

calling all crones

Crones of the World Unite!

The *Crone Chronicles* is a quarterly networking journal designed to activate the archetype of the Crone within contemporary culture. It plumbs the wondrous and mystical revelations which come to us as we pass from middle age into the wisdom of old age. It offers heady commentary, deep philosophical exploration, and even addresses that phase of life barely whispered until now, menopause.

Join with us as we channel women's wisdom, energy, and the ancient power locked within.

Subscription: $15.00
P.O. Box 81-S
Kelly, WY 83011
(307) 733-5409
CRONEHOOD IS POWERFUL

Awakenings
Programs Honoring The Feminine Divine

- Ritual & Sacred Celebration
- Body, Earth & Spiritual Healing
- Creative Self-Expression
- Personal & Cultural Transformation

Workshops, weekends, intensives, yearlong program - *or* - bring *Awakenings* to your location!

Contact: Bernice Marie-Daly, Ph.D., nationally recognized author, educator, futurist, counselor and ritualist.
57 Willowbrook La., New Canaan, CT 06840
Tel. 203/966-6347

EARTH REVERENCE™

Delight in a return to the 1880's when the lady of the house was the family chemist. Create your own aromatherapy blends like Victorian ladies once did. Discover our Earth Reverence™ catalog of essential oils and other aromatherapy ingredients including rich recipes. Earth Reverence,™ a natural and nostalgic alternative to beauty. $2.50 (refunded with first order).

Dept. SAGE P.O. Box 12243
St. Petersburg, Florida 33733-2243

A Circle is Cast: *Ideas for ritual work*

by SageWoman Readers

Breaking the Chains: A Ritual for Survivors of Abuse

by Laurel

This is a ritual performed by my circle. All the circle sisters are survivors of abuse. We have all come far enough in our healing that we wanted to break the bonds and patterns of our abuse. Some of us have memories and know names, others of us know what happened, but not who, and some are still searching for what happened. All of us struggle with 'why?' Regardless of where we are in our recovery, we all got something out of this ritual. I hope others do, too. If any of the women reading this are interested, they can contact me at P O Box 92165, Warren MI 48092-0165. If there is enough response I would be interested in writing a book of rituals for abuse survivors.

Our ritual was for survivors only. We performed the ritual on a country hilltop in full sunlight. To minimize the occurrence of flashbacks in circle members during the ritual, please discuss all aspects of the ritual, and any parts of your abuse that will be mentioned. It is very important that you work this out beforehand, and have everyone in the circle know each other well. This is not a ritual for a casual group of acquaintances to perform! We chose to work with male as well as female energy, through calling the horned one, lover and protector of women. Some women's circles may wish to work with male energy only, in which case they should omit the parts of the ritual which pertain to the God.

The ritual began with sweeping or actually, raking a circle on the ground. We each placed something personal in each of the four directions. Along with these personal items there was a large feather in the East, a small cauldron with a tiny twig fire inside it in the South, a bright red cup containing sea water in the West and a clay Goddess figure in the North. A figure of the Goddess Kali stood in the center, to signify change.

Cast the circle in whatever manner is normal to your group then cast it again with the following words. [Your group may wish to have the protection of the Deities before casting the Second Circle. If so, use the 'Calling in the Lady and Lord' invocation first.]

East: *For years I have lived confused, not knowing why I did the things I did. Only knowing that I must do them. I call the East with that confusion, the grey fog of unknowing.*

South: *For years, I have been angry. I did not know why. I turned the anger inward, and hurt myself. I turned the anger outward to drive away those who got too close. I call the South with that anger.*

West: *For years, I have mourned, never knowing why. Only feeling a deep emptiness, a hollow space inside that refused to be filled. I call the uncontainable West, the sorrow for a childhood lost.*

North: *For years, I have hated and punished my body. I withheld food and water. I hurt myself. I called my body 'it' as if something apart from me. I call the North with my body, abused and broken.*

Calling in the Lady and Lord

I call the Crones,
The old ones
who determined the law.
Protectors of children,
wise women, healers.
Come to me,
hear the wrongs done to me.
Hear the name of he who raped me.
Cry vengeance!

I call Justice.
I know something happened,
I do not know who.
I will not name names,
for I have none, yet.
Let Justice right this wrong.
Come to us, Justice.

I call Kali.
Changer,
Destroyer,
Creatrix,
Change us,
Heal us,
Be with us in circle.

I call the Horned One,
Gentle lover,
Protector of children,
Defender of the defenseless.
You whose name has been defiled
by the acts of our abusers.
Be beside us now, in this circle.

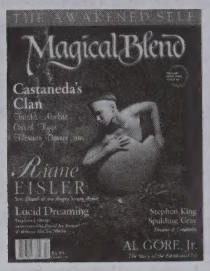
I call the spirits of those unjustly punished, those victimized by power, power wielded by the cruel, the foolish and the mad.

Telling: We then began a very personal part of the ritual. We told what we had lost, and what we wanted to recover. As planned in advance, each survivor told her story, using as much or as little detail as she desired. Decide together, beforehand, how graphic your stories will be. In order to minimize flashbacks, review everything that you plan to tell beforehand.

Breaking the Chains: After each survivor spoke, she did something to break her chain with her abuse and abuser, something symbolic which she had herself chosen. One action was repeated four times, once for each direction. (You may wish to begin in the North and go counterclockwise around the circle, as this is a banishing type activity. Whatever works for you and your group is best.) Some of our group burned one ribbon, tied to a staff in the center of the circle, for each break. Others broke clay pots, burned herbs, and cast stones into water. The idea is to ritually make a strong break with your abuse, and to dispel the energy which you have confronted and rejected from your life.

When all have finished, you may proceed with casting a third circle, the Circle of Healing. This is done as a group, with a chance for each person to pledge what steps they will take to aid in their healing.

FREE ISSUE
when you subscribe to Magical Blend for 4-issues



Subscribe now and receive 5 issues for the price of 4 —a $7.75 savings off the newsstand price. If, after receiving the first issue, you are not completely satisfied, you may cancel your subscription and owe nothing.

Spirituality • Paganism • Shamanism • Art
Healing • Magick and much more...

○ FREE ISSUE with each 4-issue subscription —A total of 5-issues for $17.00

name

address

city, state, zip code

Send checks or money order to: Magical Blend Magazine, 234 West 3rd St. #D, Dept. SW, Chico, CA 95928

FULL MOON RISING

Immerse yourself in the sounds of Nature... Feel Gaea's healing touch. Float in songs of wonder and feel the magic of Oneness.

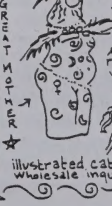
SOUND SERENE
20533 Biscayne #4204-S, Miami FL 33180

Cassette, $12 includes mailing.

HEARTIFACTS POTTERY
P.O. Box 862, Mt. Shasta, CA. 96067
916-926-3958

Slip-cast high fired stoneware Goddesses lovingly hand decorated with feathers, shells and glass beads.

Stoneware jewelry, Moon Runes, wall plaques, smudge bowls and much more!



visit the store!
5833 Dunsmuir Ave
Dunsmuir, CA
916-235-2717

illustrated catalog $1 refundable
wholesale inquiries welcome

Casting the Third Circle

East: *I call the East now with wisdom, with knowledge and clear sight. I pledge . . . (for example, to continue my therapy, to keep my journal . . .)*

South: I call the South with power, with action and determination. I pledge . . . (for example, to learn self-defense, to go on a woman's march, to volunteer at a shelter . . .)

West: I call the West with all my emotions, to accept that none of them are bad, all are acceptable. I pledge . . . (for example, to feel my emotions, to ask for what I need, to be gentle with myself. . .)

North: I call the North with my body, made in the image of the Goddess and worthy of love. I pledge . . . (for example, to wear comfortable clothes, to eat healthy foods, not to injure myself . . .)

After this, the group should continue the ritual if you have a regular practice (sharing bread and drink, drumming, or whatever) or whatever. It would be helpful to find some way to ground and center the high level of emotional energy which has been generated, and eating is a good way to do this. A potluck of favorite sharable snacks, hidden under the altar in the center, for example, might be good. When the energy seems right, release the energies using whatever dismissal is standard to your group.

Ritual for Healing Ancestral Separations

by Lunaria Poole

As an American woman whose grandparents were European immigrants, I grew up hearing stories of great family hardships. Most often these stories centered around untimely separations and early deaths. I heard about how some family members came to America to find work, and were never reunited with the family they left behind. I heard about how both my grandmother and her sister lost their first child and husbands soon after. I realized that on both sides of my family, there were no elderly couples, and hadn't been for several generations. All the people in these stories were long dead, but I felt that, somehow, the unresolved pain caused by these separations still existed and could be felt.

The generation before mine handled the pain by not talking about it, and putting their parent's memories out of their minds. But I felt a responsibility to consider and acknowledge the pain, and resolve it (at least for myself) through a ceremonial gesture.

In a way, I guess this ritual expresses the notion of the afterlife as a big family reunion. My beliefs lean more towards reincarnation or a kind of energy transferal, but somehow these images seemed right for the people my grandparents and others of their generation seemed to be. I know that my ritual does not undo that which was done, but I felt that it would help deal with the residual pain.

To prepare for the ritual, I photocopied pictures of my family members, and cut the copies into paper dolls. Those family members for which there was no visual record available I represented with paper dolls with just their names inscribed. I also cut out two large paper hearts and sewed them together into a pocket with red thread. I also prepared by gathering comfrey leaves, rosemary, roses, a pot of earth and a red tulip bulb for each family member.

I burned rose incense and put rose oil on the candles with which I cast a circle, using one candle for each of the four directions, and one representing the spirit. I lit a fire with the spirit candle, and spoke this invocation;

"I call upon my guiding spirit to walk with me from the boundaries of time. Together we will heal the painful echoes of early separation within my family. Let these images represent, not the people themselves, but the pain of separation that they carried in their lives. As their living relative, I carry their blood and spiritual memory. I cleanse their pain through my own heart's resolve so that their footfalls on earth may be free of tragic connection. In this way, may they find loving reunion in a loving heart."

I then took each paper doll in hand, opened myself up to loving the person it represented and considered the pain that they had experienced. I placed each doll together with the next in the reverse order of their separation. While I was doing this, I began to experience a strong sensation of family wholeness. I thought I would have to 'will' this intent onto the dolls, but instead I felt a rush of well being as I put the dolls together.

I folded each group of dolls together with a sprig of rosemary, a rose petal and some comfrey, and tied with a red thread knotted three times. I wrapped all the groups together in a comfrey leaf and tucked it with a rose into the pocket of my paper heart. I sewed the heart closed with my red thread and wrote words like 'together', 'whole', 'healed' and 'family' on the outside with a red pencil. I kissed the heart and did a visualization of loving togetherness and happiness. I could feel them with me, and felt myself as part of a whole family, instead of a tragically splintered one.

I placed the paper heart on the fire and watched it burn, continuing my visualization of togetherness and slowly letting it become a less focused meditation. I saw this feeling of togetherness and well being expand into a general loving presence that went far beyond my own family circle, into a presence that we are all a part of.

I placed the ashes along with the earth and bulbs into the pot, saying as I did, "*I ground this energy by returning unity to the earth so that it may be cleansed through renewal.*"

When the bulbs bloom months from now, my spell will have reached its conclusion. The pot of red flowers in the spring will be a visual affirmation of our living reunion.

[Editor's Note: We welcome your contributions to 'A Circle is Cast'; either entire rituals or just little parts and pieces which have worked for you. Don't be shy — we can all create ritual by opening to the creativity of the Goddess within. Please share your rituals with us. Blessed Be.]

Ancient Memory

100% Beeswax candles
Incense, oils, robes, tarot cloths & more!

'for those who are sensitive to energies . . .I recommend these products without hesitation.' — review in SageWoman #19

Send $1 for brochure to:
Ancient Memory, 2005 Palo Verde Ave #117
Long Beach, CA 90815

Sisters of the Moon

...for the Gypsy in your Soul!

luscious gypsy charm tm beeswax candles...
enchanting household charms...spellbinding ritual supplies and kits...
bags of magick tm... magickal mobiles...mermaid collectibles...
mystical cards...beaded velvet bags...
bewitching gypsy frocks and accessories
all lovingly witchcrafted...just like grandma use to make!

catalogue $4.00:
3115 Newport Blvd. Suite 124 Newport Beach, California 92663
Wholesale Available

"JBL statues are authentic...they are fired using the ancient technology of the old pagan cultures, with the artisans working in a community process."
- Morning Glory Zell

• • •

"You offer treasures that celebrate the Goddess in all Her guises. The statues are magnificent."
- Deborah Ann Light, Clergy, Covenant of the Goddess

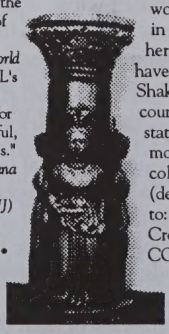
• • •

"One of the high-lights of my course Women's World was using JBL's archetypes. Thank you for these powerful, earthy figures."
- Dr. Susana M. Sotillo, Montclair (NJ) State College

• • •

Create magic in your heart, home and altar!
Reclaim the earth-healing goddesses and gods venerated by our pagan foreparents!
Give the Goddess as a Gift!

Mayan Ixchel


Triple Brigit

JBL Statues are created by a woman-directed cooperative in Calcutta. Its members are hereditary icon-makers who have molded clay images of Shakti, the Great Goddess, for countless generations. The statues are 3" to 12" tall and mostly priced at $3 to $29. For color catalog send $2 (deductible from first order) to: JBL, P.O. Box 163-H, Crozet, VA 22932. VISA/MC/COD call 1-800-290-6203 for immediate shipment. *Your satisfaction is guaranteed or money back!*

Other images include:
Akuaba, Arrianrhod, Astarte, Artemis, Black Madonna, Bacchus, Bast, Dagda, Demeter, Durga, Dakini, Epona, Ganesh, Hecate, Hermes, Hestia, Inanna, Ishtar, Isis, Krishna, Kuanyin, Kali, Kernunnos, Kerridwin, Laxmi, Lilith, Lugh, Morrigan, Medusa, Nile Goddess, Pan, Rama, Satyr, Sheelanagig, Sekmet, Shiva, Serpent Goddess, Tara, Vishnu, Willendorf, Yabyum, Yemayah, Zazen Buddha, and many more.

Imagick Ltd.
P.O.BOX 405
LEDYARD, CT. 06339
(203) 536-1572

Fantasy and New Age Rubber Stamps
Retail Catalogue 2.50
refundable

Of a Like Mind

newspaper & network for Goddess ♀

...the best feminist spirituality listings found anywhere.—Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*

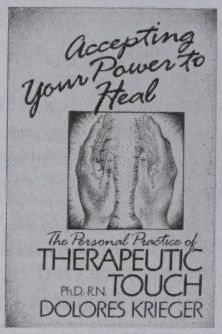
sample issue/$4
$13-33/year/sliding scale
$18-38/1st class
$23-43/outside US

Box 6021
Madison, WI 53716 USA

Leaves of Sage: *Book Reviews*

by SageWoman Readers

***Accepting Your Power to Heal: The Personal Practice of Therapeutic Touch*, by Dolores Krieger, Bear & Company Books, Santa Fe, NM. 1993**
Paperback, $10.95
Reviewed by Anne Newkirk Niven



One of the most important lessons in my life recently has been the lesson of learning to pay attention; to go beyond the intellectual 'head stuff' which I learned was the only valid knowledge, into the realm of the body, emotion, and spirit, where true deep knowledge resides. Along the way, I've learned to respect the somewhat amorphous, but emphatically real interconnection between the body, mind, and spirit which our culture is just now beginning to acknowledge.

This book acknowledges that connection in a way that even the most ardent skeptic can accept; the author's professional credentials (she is an R.N. who has taught her techniques to thousands of other nurses and medical professionals) give her authority which might otherwise be denied on the basis of her non-traditional technique.

Basically, this book is an introduction to the ancient art of healing through the laying on of hands; it covers energy fields, yoga, chakra work and more, all within the purview of what the author calls 'Therapeutic Touch'.

I'll admit to not having exhaustively read this book yet; but even without experimenting with all the techniques and exercises in detail, the book has helpful me to say 'yes' to my own burgeoning desire to find ways to heal myself and my family with my own two hands. Its didactic tone is somewhat off-putting but necessary; it helps in overcoming our cultural conditioning which insists that healing is done only by professionals.

To a person experienced with chakra or energy work, this book will probably seem elementary, even simplistic; but it's perfect if you are just beginning to overcome your internal resistance to healing with energy and want to try some simple, low-power techniques to heal yourself and your loved ones.

"Therapeutic Touch works. It can be helpful to persons with a wide range of illness, as attested to by a growing body of substantive research findings. This book has been written so that you, the reader, will realize a highly reliable and useful aspect of yourself that can be intelligently used to help or heal those in need. Healing is a natural potential that can be actualized under the appropriate circumstances. You can do it; everyone who is willing to undertake the discipline to learn Therapeutic Touch can do it. You need only try in order to determine the truth of this statement for yourself. So, I invite you: TRY."

Editor's note: we receive many books which we'd like to review if we had the staff. Please contact us if you are interested in reviewing books for *SageWoman*.

Tools for Transformation: *Product Reviews*

by SageWoman Readers

Drums
from All One Tribe™ Drums
P O Drawer N, Taos, NM 87511
Prices range from $120 - $225
1-800-442-DRUM
Reviewed by Anne Newkirk Niven

I love drums, although I don't get a chance to use them as much as I'd like to, so when All One Tribe approached *SageWoman* and asked us to review one of their drums, I was happy to agree.

All One Tribe is one of the better-known companies making drums for the Pagan/New Age market and I have often seen their advertisements and glossy flyers. I was eager to see if their drums were actually as nice as they appeared in the ads, or if 'gloss' would outweigh substance.

I'm very pleased to say that their drums are just as yummy as they look. Extremely well-crafted, lovingly designed (by the Native American artist BJ Quintanta, who is shown in the adjacent photo), and with a deeply resonant sound quality, I can recommend this drum to anyone. If you want a traditional handdrum that both looks beautiful and plays magnificently, these drums would make a wonderful choice.

These drums are made by drummers for drummers, the company statement of ethics respects Native American roots, and they are made with top-quality materials and non-toxic inks. Of special interest for those of us who like to drum for long periods of time (such as during drumming circles or ritual) is their patented adjustable sheep-

skin and boar-hide handle, which makes it possible to wear the drum on your arm while playing — very comfortable and no more hand blisters!

I was also pleasantly surprised that, unlike another rawhide drum that I own, this drum did not distort and sag when exposed to our wet, cold Point Arena climate. The drum was still wonderfully playable (in fact, had deepened in tone) after two months sitting in an unheated storage room in my windy coastal home.

These drums are not a casual investment — their price definitely puts them into the 'luxury' category. In addition, vegans and others who avoid using animal products may wish to purchase drums made of synthetic materials. But, if you have $120 - $225 to spend for a drum and you want a magnificent instrument, these drums seem well worth the price. ☺

GREEN EGG

Foremost Journal of the New Pagan Renaissance

Celebrating our 25th Anniversary!

GREEN EGG is the winner of **nine** awards in 1992, including the **WPPA Readers' Choice ★ Gold Award ★**

Gods and Goddesses, Magic, Deep Ecology, New Sexuality, Reclaiming History, Shamanism, Ethnobotany, Rituals, Chants, Songs, Illustrations, Poetry, Fiction, Reviews, Cartoons and the notorious Reader's Forum!

Quarterly, $15 per year (US).
Send $7 for 100th issue Special!

GREEN EGG, Box 1542-G
Ukiah, CA 95482

A Must For All Your Metaphysical Needs

STARCRAFT · DISTRIBUTORS
NEW AGE PRODUCTS AND SUPPLIES
GENERAL CATALOG

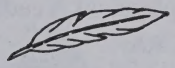
Dedicated to bringing you New Age and Metaphysical supplies at a price that won't force you to sell the kids.
Send Check or M.O. for $3.00 to:
STARCRAFT DISTRIBUTORS
P.O. Box 125, Dept SW
Muscadine, Al. 36269

The Rattle: *The Wise Woman Council*

by SageWoman Readers

The Rattle is the heart of SageWoman, where we gather to discuss issues of interest and importance to us as we pursue our spiritual paths. As each woman holds the rattle, taking her turn to speak from the heart, we listen with respectful attention, knowing that we will also will have a chance to be heard.

Send your letters to: ***The Rattle****, SageWoman, P O Box 641, Point Arena, CA 95468. All letters to the Rattle are presumed to be for publication, and may be edited for length and clarity. We publish only first names in The Rattle unless otherwise requested by the author. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of SageWoman or her staff.*



The rattle is shaken, and first to pick it up is a sister with a question . . .

I wonder if someone at your magazine could answer a question for me. The rituals in your magazine all seem to incorporate candles, incense, fragrances in oils, wine; all things I'm allergic to. Are they necessary or would the ceremonies work just as well without them? Are there any covens or spiritual groups that don't use them? Perhaps there is an ecology-conscious group that doesn't use pollutants, allergens, and intoxicants; how would I find such a group?

PEGGY

The rattle passes, hand to hand, to the next Sister in the Circle . . .

I was appalled and saddened by Merry Lightchild's story, "Community or Clique? How It Looks to a Seeker," in issue #23 (Summer '93) of *SageWoman*. Her description of feeling excluded from a group that claims to be following the Craft is a tale of humiliation and pain that should never befall one who seeks the Goddess. The group (I certainly would not call it a community) she describes sounds like every other patriarchal organization. Some members are insiders and others are out; a hierarchy prevails; and members vie for approval from the leaders. Either these people took on the language of the Craft and twisted it to fit their own selfish ends, or they were extraordinarily obtuse when it came to understanding and caring about a new member's need to feel welcome and included.

Even if Merry Lightchild's perceptions of this group were completely mistaken, as a newcomer she should have been enlightened in a loving, caring way. She sounds jealous and fearful, and those feelings should have been addressed. If she felt that "acceptance in the community was really hard to achieve"; if her husband was invited to nude parties but she was excluded; if "you were just lucky to be invited" to a party, she wasn't in a Goddess-centered community. She was in an exploitative group that, whatever its claims, was in direct opposition to the sacred, woman-loving Craft. Private dinner parties, social events and hot-tubbing don't come first; a caring, sharing, well-grounded community comes first. I hope Merry Lightchild has found a community that believes that and acts upon it.

Blessings on you all.

HEATHER

With a shake of her wrist, another Sister takes the rattle, and addresses us . . .

The Rattle passes to me . . .!

Having recently formed my own group, I identify with the delights and downfalls contributors expressed in the Community issue (#23). First of all, these groups are made up of human beings. Regardless of its Craft or Goddess orientation, a group is not immune fro the usual societal ills and pressures of politics and personalities. Some folks attend these groups because it's the latest fad. Most of us do it because we have a genuine need to express our love of and spirituality for Mother Earth.

When I first desired to branch out and practice part-time in a group, I found a couple of existing groups by going to a feminist bookstore in the closest large city

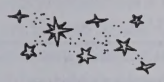
and asking what was around. I liked one group because the mix of women was comfortable for me. However, they were loosely organized and it wasn't always the same women in attendance from month to month. It was nice, but I wanted more continuity and commitment. A second group was already well-established, and I had a gut feeling while talking to their leader that it wasn't really what I was looking for, so I passed it up. (Never be afraid to ask questions — you want to know if you'll fit in or feel ridiculous!)

I then decided to take matters into my own hands. I put a small ad in *Of a Like Mind* that basically listed my interests and what I was looking for in group participants. I received three responses! The Goddess was shining on us, as we met, we gelled, and recently did a group-bonding ritual.

What makes this work? Besides taking a few months to reach this point (you must be patient and willing to work on a 'try-it-and-see' basis), you have to meet people that you can work with. I had met one woman who was on a totally different level that I was and I just knew it wasn't going to work with her. Our group is all on the same wavelength, basically, and this is important as the group needs common goals. Another issue of importance is that we all desire to make a commitment to the group. We each contribute to the writing and performing of all our rituals. If we cannot meet all together, we perform our rituals in privacy at an appointed time. We have a communication chain, share a newsletter, and discuss ideas together. We are also consensus-governed. We are also a small group, and wish to remain that way, at least for the present time.

There are other women's groups nearby, and other opportunities to share within community (classes, meetings at bookstores, etc.) and we attend these events as well. To sum up, what a solitary needs to do to find others is: put out feelers, go with your gut feelings, and give it time. Consult with the spirits, if need be, and community will come your way! It's invigorating to find a group where ritual is done well, for it gives a feeling of power and strength.

MARLENE



Gently, a new sister reaches out to the circle, as she thanks us for being present here . . .

As a self-taught, solitary witch of three years, my first issue of *SageWoman*, #24 on Solitary Spirituality, was like a blessing from the Goddess.

The articles seemed to be speaking directly to me, and to issues I was trying to deal with. The best part, though, was the welcome I felt.

About two years ago I sampled various Pagan magazines and was surprised at all the animosity towards solitary witches. I felt very much that I was not wanted or welcome.

I was ready, in a fit of hurt feelings and anger, to give up on the Goddess. She had other ideas, and Her call was much too strong, but I limited my study to books which seemed much more accepting of the path I had chosen to follow.

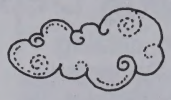
Since then, I have grown spiritually and feel much more secure in Her service, so I am trying out the magazines again. They now seem much more accepting of the solitary path.

The Goddess has accepted and welcomes me into Her service and given me my name. That is all the validation I need.

I am looking forward to future issues of *SageWoman*. The more I learn, the more I know how much more there is I need and want to learn.

Blessed Be.

OWL MOONSHADOW



To the sound of stones rattling in the gourd, the rattle passes to another sister . . .

Thank you so much for Rachel Raymond's 'Bringing the Goddess into the 21st Century'. It was so refreshing to read of someone else who blesses and appreciates all the ways the Goddess has made our lives easier. Do any of us want to commune with the river by spending an entire day washing clothes in it? Or invoke the power of fire by cleaning the chimney once a month? I say prayers of thanks to Gertrude and Selma who take care of my family's clothes, and Falnir who keeps up warm and snug; and Blanche who starts on the coldest day and without whom I would not have the freedom I have. So, let's not cry about technology, my sisters. It is because of these gifts of Bridget and Minerva that we even have the time or energy to be nostalgic.

Bright Blessings to All!

CAROLYN

With a smile, the next sister holds out her hand . . .

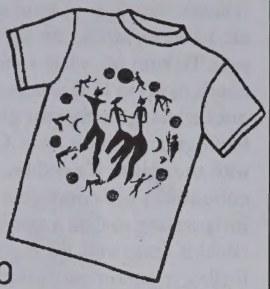
Thank you for the Winter issue! As a solo practitioner I found it most helpful and encouraging. I especially enjoyed Susannah McBride's article. I often feel alienated because there is no pagan group around me. I've read a lot, but feel that I know very little and would so much appreciate

Earth Spirit Designs

Send for a free catalog of Earth Spirit Design's magical artwear images.

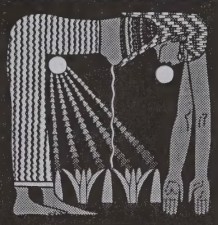
Box 2221 Abingdon, Va 24210

ask about custom prints for your event!



GODDESSES

IMAGES FOR COLORING & MEDITATION



Created by KATE CARTWRIGHT & ALEXANDRA HART

16 IMAGES FROM AROUND THE WORLD, SUITABLE FOR COLORING & FRAMING, EACH WITH HER STORY AND AN INVOCATION.

GREAT FOR USE IN WOMEN'S CIRCLES, FOR TEACHING GIRLS ABOUT WOMEN'S MYSTERIES, OR AS A GIFT FOR YOURSELF OR THE GODDESSES OF ALL AGES IN YOUR LIFE!

Send $9.95 (add $ .75 Sales Tax, CA Res.)
Plus $2.00 Postage & Handling
($ .50 each add'l book ordered)

To: Concepts Editorial & Design Services
P. O. Box 1938, Sebastopol, CA 95473

Wholesale Inquiries Welcomed

"THE MOST USER-FRIENDLY DRUM IN EXISTENCE..."

THE ALL ONE TRIBE™ DRUM

Unique, PATENTED handle! Natural, branded leather with soft, sheepskin underside adjusts to fit any hand. Eliminates blisters and cramps!

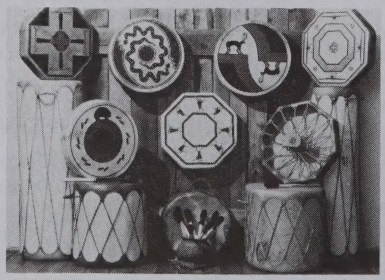
Handmade in Taos by master Native American drummakers. Authentic, excellent workmanship ensures long life and superb tone.

Powerful handprinted designs make extraordinary wall hangings when not being played. Drums carry signatures of artist and drummaker.

Environmentally friendly, non-toxic inks do not impair tone, are resistant to chips and scratches and maintain true, vibrant color.

Wonderfully portable. Lightweight to carry across town or country for all types of drumming events! Drum bags and free beater available.

Socially conscious business. A percentage of profits goes to support Native American causes.



ONE ALL TRIBE DRUM

FREE BROCHURE: CALL 1-800-442-DRUM

learning from more experienced sisters (and maybe brothers). As it is, I do what I can, on my own, and trust the Goddess doesn't giggle too much over my unorthodox rituals! Thank you, Susannah McBride, for reminding me that "you are a priestess of the Goddess every second of your existence." I needed to hear that!

I'm looking to learn more about my religious heritage, and the ancient Celtic practices. Does anyone out there have any books or articles they can recommend on this subject?

Thank you, and thank the Goddess for *SageWoman*!

CAILLEACH

A sister feels uneasy in our circle, and asks us to open our hearts as she reaches out . . .

Basically, I'm very pleased with the structure and contents of *SageWoman*. It's very inspiring and instructive to solitary practitioners like myself.

I do feel a certain amount of distance, however. I feel I'm unable to fully bond with everything I read in it because I don't see anyone who looks like me represented. Please, let there be more diversity — specifically, more women of color.

I refuse to stock my shelves with Z. Budapest, Starhawk, Ffiona Morgan, and Lynn Andrews, (although I do own Laurie Cabot's *Power of the Witch* and Sybil Leek's *Diary of a Witch*) and it truly saddens me that Louisah Teich's *Jambalaya* is only one of ten titles of interest to Black or African/African American spiritualists.

You might say that it's up to us to make the change, but I maintain it isn't too difficult for small

changes on *SageWoman*'s part. For example: you could commission the work of women artists of color and request the submission of articles from people of color, or people who don't necessarily follow the Goddess tradition. Perhaps in your next issue you could ask for articles about Santeria, or various Vodun traditions.

I'd love to hear from people (wimmim, I guess, since you're *SageWoman*!!) who are Pagans but don't follow any rules or traditions set by others. I'd love to know how they give thanks without having 'religion'.

I'd also like someone to discuss the spiritually awakening benefits of celibacy, and let's hear from bi- and pansexuals for once!! And not just the politics of such diverse and 'radical' life-styles but also how spiritually enriching it is to live life to its fullest realizing one's complete potential to be sex-positive sensualists in a frigid world of fear and unacceptance.

I'd like to hear from wimmim who have great friendships with their husbands and worship or do rituals with them. (It's easy for me to believe that wimmin-only couples can do this, it's more difficult to find a good man!)

Thanks for requesting our input and I hope you all have continuing success. It's great that you're here.

CASSANDRA

[Editor's note: I agree with Cassandra on the need to increase the participation of women of color in *SageWoman*. Please write if you have ideas about how we can work on this together.]

Another voice is raised as the rattle passes from hand to hand . . .

I am very new to women's spirituality, having just begun to explore it over the past few years. My only contact with the community is through books and magazines. (*SageWoman* is a lifeline!) I feel very drawn to the Goddess and feel like I am coming home to something which I have always known. But I also feel a strong connection to the religion in which I was raised. I feel it is part of my identity, as well as a link to my family and heritage. At the same time, as a dancer and a woman, I am very disturbed by the negative messages that my childhood religion sends concerning women, the body, the natural world, sexuality — in short, everything that the Goddess affirms.

I realize that everyone must find the balance for themselves concerning these issues. Some might leave their old religion behind; others might find a way to make it a part of their life. So, I know I must find the answers for myself. However, it might help to hear some personal stories from women who have or are going through the same process. Stories, suggestions, questions, affirmations — they all might help me feel less alone. A friend once told me that confusion is a very spiritual state, because in it we are open to possibilities. Another friend advised me, in a difficult situation, to "stay in the middle in a muddle." So, I'm going to do that, but in the meantime I would love to hear from my sisters.

Brightest Spring Blessings!

KAJSA

And, as the rattle travels around the circle, wider and wider, it passes . . . to you! ☺

BLAZING STAR HERBAL SCHOOL & SAGE MOUNTAIN

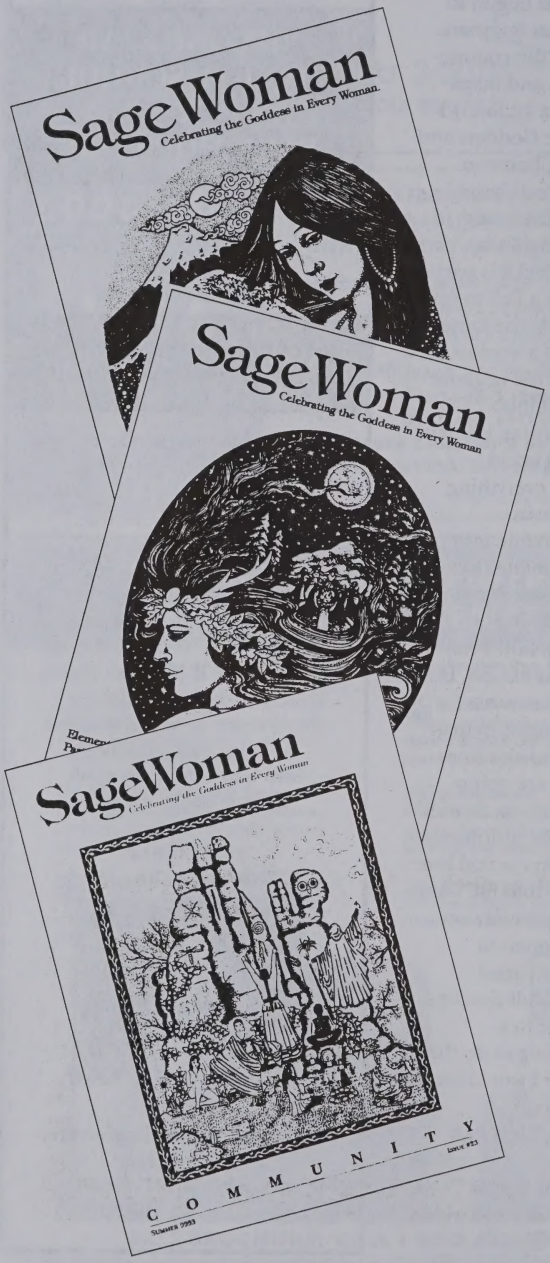
Present The

7TH ANNUAL WOMEN'S HERBAL CONFERENCE

August 19-21, 1994

Join Rosemary Gladstar,
Juliette de Bairacli Levy
& 20 leading women herbalists
for a wonderful weekend
of woman-spirit & workshops
for beginner & advanced students
on Herbalism & Women's Health.
Held at a beautiful
retreat center in New Hampshire.
$225 includes workshops,
herb walks, delicious meals,
comfortable lodging
&
entertainment.
$195 before June 15.

Write:
Women's Herbal Conference,
PO Box 232,
Marshfield, VT 05658,
or call (802) 456-1402.


SageWoman
Celebrating the Goddess in Every Woman
SageWoman
Celebrating the Goddess in Every Woman
SageWoman
Celebrating the Goddess in Every Woman
C O M M U N I T Y

Celebrate Spring

with

back issues from

SageWoman

SageWoman's back issues are as beautiful and fresh today as ever. They feature the warmth, comfort, and magic that has made SageWoman a favorite of spiritual women across the country. Complete your collection today!

This order is from:

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____STATE_____ZIP_____

Yes, I'd like to Celebrate!

____ Renew/enter my subscription ($18)_____

____ Send me _____ back issues ($6.50 each) as noted below _____

- ❑ #1-17 (full set, $100)
- ❑ #18 - Air
- ❑ #19 - Fire
- ❑ #20 - Water
- ❑ #21 - Earth
- ❑ #22 - Global Goddess
- ❑ #23 - Community
- ❑ #24 - Solitary Spirituality

Subtotal _____

Calif residents add $.50 per back issue sales tax_____

Total Due _____

____Payment Enclosed ____ Charge my ___ Visa ___ M/C

_____ exp. ___

All subscriptions begin the next issue printed. Back issues are sent USPS book rate; please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery.

Women at the Well

A Marketplace of Goods, Services, and Ideas

(Un)Classified rates: 75¢ per word; 20 word minimum. The first two to five words appear in **Boldface, Small Caps**, company names appear in Small Caps. Please see page 5 for deadlines.

Coming Soon: To help our readers access the information offered in this section we will be reorganizing our classifieds shortly to include (gasp!) actual 'classifications'. Please contact our advertising office for details.

9th Annual Visions of the Goddess Gathering. Crone Dancing Women Come Thundering Lodge. Celebrating the American Goddess Tradition in the Old Growth Redwoods of Northern California. Send SASE for info to Redwood River Lodge, 111 Orchard Lane, Carlotta, CA 95528

Magical Recordings — Ritual Music from Starhawk and Reclaiming. Send SASE for free brochure: Serpentine Music Productions, PO Box 2564-SW, Sebastapol, CA 95473-2564

Re-Membering Our Connection, reclaiming our power! Books, tapes, videos, ritual goods, oils, incense, candles, sacred images, crystals, jewelry, artwork, craftware, music makers, kids' stuff, treasures and pleasures, unique and enduring gifts. Complete catalog $3.00, credited on order. Roots and Wings, 980 Winchester, Lincoln Park MI 48146

Baba Yaga News A quarterly newsletter celebrating the Goddess and women's community. $9.00 yearly. Free sample. Box 330S, South Lee, MA 01260 413-243-4036.

Celtic Knotwork beautifully handpainted on handcrafted barrettes. Twelve magical designs. Send SASE for brochure: Firethorn Designs, PO Box 1414, Guerneville, CA 95446

Quality Books and Tapes by Marion Weinstein (Positive Magic, Wicca & Goddess Religion). We carry: *Positive Magic: Occult Self-Help, Earth Magic: A Dianic Book of Shadows, The Ancient/Modern Witch* (book and tapes), and *Magic for Peace* (book and tape). See our Positive Magic t-shirts and sweatshirts! Free Catalog (Please Note Our New Address) Earth Magic Productions, 2166 Broadway, New York, NY 10024

Native American Ceremonial Tools, Herbs, Tobaccos, Audio, Video, Books and more! Free catalog. Write NAC PO Box 1062-SW, Cherokee, NC 28719

Goddess Astrology Imprint from your birth moment. Taped reading $50. Time, Date, Place of Birth. Flowering Circle Astrology, PO Box 10116, Zephyr Cove, NV 89448

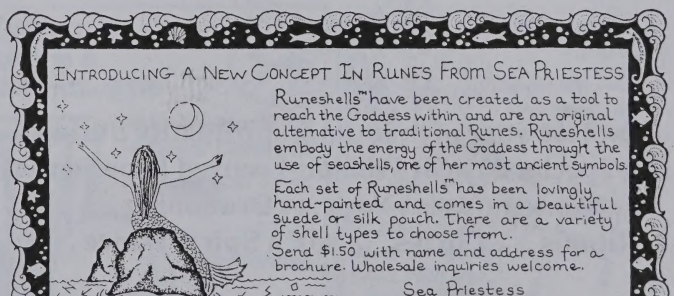
Earrings: Gorgeous Original Designs! Polished stone beads. Color catalog sheets: $3.00 plus LSASE. Alexandria's Art, 826 Via Juanita, San Marcos, CA 92069

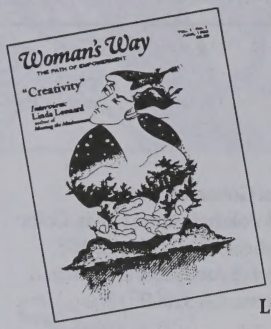
Batiked Ancient Goddess and animal images on t-shirt dresses. (Goddess sizes available.) Send SASE for brochure. Goddesswares, 4128 Holmes-SW, Kansas City, MO 64110

Woman of the Wands Goddess, Wicca, Aromatherapy & Tarot. Catalog $3.00 credited. Box 330S, South Lee, MA 01260. 413-243-4036.

Mountain Spirit — A Woman's Herbal, tinctures, salves, massage and body oils, smudging, etc. $1.00 PO Box 368, Port Townsend, WA 98368. 206-385-4491.

Self-Discipline in Ten Days. How to go from Thinking to Doing. Famous $200 course NOW in book form. ONLY $14.95 + $4.00 S&H, Visa/MC. HUB Publishing. ORDER NOW: 1-800-266-4099 Guarantee.


Introducing A New Concept In Runes From Sea Priestess
Runeshells™ have been created as a tool to reach the Goddess within and are an original alternative to traditional Runes. Runeshells embody the energy of the Goddess throught the use of seashells, one of her most ancient symbols.
Each set of Runeshells™ has been lovingly hand-painted and comes in a beautiful suede or silk pouch. There are a variety of shell types to choose from.
Send $1.50 with name and address for a brochure. Wholesale inquiries welcome.
Sea Priestess
3119 W. George, #1
Chicago, IL 60618-7610



Woman's Way
THE PATH OF EMPOWERMENT

A New Quarterly Publication
supporting self-discovery
and encouraging creativity!

Articles, poetry, fiction,
journal entries, artwork

$3.00–sample $12.00–year
Ad Rates & Submission Guidelines—SASE

Lynn Bijili Marlow, Editor, **(303) 530-7617**
6465 Outrigger Ct., Boulder, CO 80301

TRAVEL:
Search For European Goddesses: $3195.
July 16-Aug. 2, 1994 (18 Days)
China: U.N. 4th International Women's Conference
Aug.21-Sept. 4, 1995 (15 days) $2995.

BOOKS:
Readings for Older Woman 11.95
Women's History: Dramatic Readings
Sappho /Hypatia / Mary Wollstonecraft/
Deborah Sampson/E. Goldman/ Eliz.G. Flynn ..12.95
Goddesses, Witches, and the Paradigm Shift: Dramatic Readings 14.95
Memorial Services For Women 8.95
Readings For Women's Programs 6.95
(add $3. p/h: 8% CA. tax)

HOT FLASH PRESS
P.O. Box 21506
San Jose, CA.
95151
(408) 292-1172
Meg Bowman

Living a womanist future today
Womongathering
The Festival of Womyn's Spirituality

Explore your own unique spirituality during five special days of Womon-Focused Experiential Workshops . . . Yoga . . . Drumming . . . Rituals . . . Circles . . . and a Spiral Dance . . .

For information, write
RR 5 Box 185, Franklinville, NJ 08322 (609) 694-2037

The Great Goddess Gift Collections. Gift catalog from Nancy Blair at **Star River Productions.** Museum quality reproductions of ancient Goddess sculpture and jewelry and many gifts to soothe your soul. Send $2.00 for full color catalog. Star River, PO Box 7754, North Brunswick, NJ 08902

Lady Unique: back issues available of *Lady Unique Inclinations of the Night*, an early women's spirituality journal (1976-1983). Send SASE to Kay Turner c/o GITN, PO Box 49828, Austin, TX 78765

Luxury Leisure for Le$$ - Stretch your entertainment dollar! Popular book shows HOW TO find bargains & FREEbies. $11.95 + $4.00 S&H, Visa/MC. HUB Publishing. ORDER NOW 1-800-266-4099. Guarantee.

Word Processing Service. I offer printing of rituals, spells, recipes, etc. for personal and professional use. Send LSAE for details. Lady Selena Kyte (SW) PO Box 1022, St. Ann, MO 63074

Spiritual Strength Necklace for women: instructions and silk bead cord, $5.00 plus SASE. PO Box 1172, Oak Park, IL 60304

Circle Network News: A quarterly newspaper/journal of Paganism, Wicca, Goddess, Shamanism, Magic and Nature Spirituality. Articles, art, national/international news, rituals, reviews, contacts, advertising and more. $13/US bulk, $17/US. Free sample copy. PO Box 219, Mt.Horeb, WI 53572 USA

Lucrative Business — Right Livelihood. Create continual residual income and freedom of life-style providing Multi-Pure's top-rated water filters. Money-back guaranteed - proven finest - universally needed everywhere. No pressure — honest way to help others and yourself. 1-800-477-7325 ext. 127. FREE information.

Oshadi Essential Oils. Organic/Wild grown. A complete line of Aromatherapy products. 250 pure essential oils. 45 synergies. Free catalog. Box 824, Rogers, AR 72757. 501-636-0579.

Journey to the Goddess - Italy - May 14-28, 1994. Join us on a spiritual and intellectual journey for women. As the moon waxes and wanes, we will honor the Maiden, the Mother, and the Crone at sites sacred since prehistoric times. Our journey will take us from secluded mountain groves to ancient towns, from open fields overlooking the sea to temple complexes. Willow Way Tours, 7822 Cayuga Ave. Bethesda, MD 20817. Phone/fax 301-320-9631.

Coming Out Pagan: high quality networking quarterly for LesBiGay Pagans of diverse traditions. Positive energies only! Subscription $11, sample $3, make checks/money orders to Wordsmith Writing Services, Send SASE for submission guidelines. PO Box 30811, Bethesda, MD 20824-0811

Cheap Leisure Thrills$ - stop busting your budget! Newsletter shows HOW TO stretch entertainment dollars. Ample copy, $1.00 & #10 size SASE to: HUB Publishing, Box 45025, Seattle, WA 98145

Goddess Incenses, perfumes, almanacs, books and other magic. $1 catalog. Marah, Box 948, Madison, NJ 07940

Free One Month Sample from Ninefold Press Calendar of Moons. Live, do ritual aided by beautiful Sacred Calendar based on rising and setting of the Moon. Send SASE for full explanation, ancient wisdom, current Month: PO Box 2215-SW, Natick, MA 01760

Exotic Teas, Herbs and Coffees from around the world! Free catalog: Northstar, 6850 Colburn-Culeer Road, Dept. SW, Sand Point, Idaho 83864. 208-263-7108

Magical Hats and Capes - fun, functional, flowing, soft and sensual. Send $1 for catalog: CAPESTRIES, Box 549, Appleton, ME 04862

Earthlore Magic: Moon Bags, Medicine Pouches, Cloaks, Capes, Haloes. All Handcrafted in Velvets and Hand-Dyed Silks. Plus Pentacle Pouches, Elf-Crystals, Sea-Wands, and Magick. Beautifully Illustrated Catalogue $2. Wholesale/Retail Welcome. Blessed Be! Earthlore, 1442 "A" Walnut St. #53-SW,Berkeley, CA 94709

Flute/Panpipe catalog $3. Over 300 elegantly beautiful, mathematically optimized, handmade varieties. Lew Price, Box 88(SW), Garden Valley, CA 95633

Tarot Reading: Please send photograph and hand-written question, $20. Mary L. Nichols, 8048 Midcrown #501, San Antonio, TX 78239

Ocean Gypsy - a magazine for mermaid collectors & fantasy lovers. Includes poetry, artwork, stories, collectibles for sale, etc. Current issue - $3, Yearly subscription, $16 (6 issues). Ocean Gypsy, PO Box 828, Nyack, NY 10960

Free Occult Catalog Wicca, Magick, Goddess studies. Ritual items. Herbs, jewelry, books. Music. Abyss, RR1, Box 213SWM, Chester, MA 01011

Painful Menstruation? Could be the result of using tampons. Get the facts and samples of cotton menstrual pads. Send $17.95 to Fancy Rags, 16547 Smith Prairie, Yelm, WA 98597, 206-894-2443

From the Heart/H, a journal of Pagan parenting. Dedicated to providing a forum where parents of all nature-centered and positive magical paths care share the experiences of their sacred calling and help one another learn its mysteries, as well as cope with its challenges. Approx. 28 pp., 8x a year. Subscription $13, sample copy $2. FTH, c/o Kathryn Hinds, 728 Derrydown Way, Decatur, GA 30030

Women's Work, A Journal of Who We Are: a bi-monthly journal dedicated to exploring the many guises of 'women's work' in our culture, in our voices. One year $12, sample $2.50. Submission guidelines, advertising rates, SASE, 602 Avenue A., Snohomish, WA 98290

Obsidian Athames, antler or obsidian herb knives, obsidian mirrors. Brochure, $1.00 Sidda, Dept. SW, 1430 Willamette #119, Eugene, OR 97401

Weaving the Web

Networking Information and Resources

Any person or non-profit group may submit a listing in this, our new networking feature. (Listings for items for sale or for-profit organizations belong in the advertising section and will not be accepted here.) There is no charge for listings in 'Weaving the Web', but we cannot guarantee placements and may edit for space or clarity. Send your listings to: Weaving the Web, *SageWoman*, P O Box 641, Point Arena, CA 95468. Send SASE if you wish your request to be acknowledged.

I am writing a book on 'Magical Needlecraft', and I'm looking for people who have used this magical method in their Craft practices. The forms of needlework may include: spinning, weaving, embroidery, knitting, sewing, crocheting, quilting, candlewicking, beadwork, etc. I would appreciate any submissions of invocations, consecrations, blessings, spells, rituals, or instructions for particular magical projects, as well as correspondence describing how you've employed this medium in your magical efforts. Every letter is guaranteed a personal reply. Please contact: Kalioppe, 812 Courtney, Sikeston, MO 63801.

The EarthSpirit Community, publishers of Fireheart and other well-known Pagan publications, is conducting a Pagan Census. It is an attempt to document the size and diversity of the contemporary Pagan movement as accurately as possible. For more information, or to receive a Census form, write to: Pagan Census Project, EarthSpirit Community, P. O. Box 365, Medford, MA 02155.

Looking for like-minded contacts? The Magickal Exchange Network is a new correspondence service that is free and open to people of all alternative spiritual paths. Correspond one-on-one with people that share your interests or be part of a correspondence group discussing one of over 40 interest topics. For more information, send legal SASE to: Melissa North, The Magickal Exchange Network, 3337 Willow Crescent Dr. #33, Fairfax, VA 22030

I am reaching out to seek help and support. My pagan center Great Mother's Love Nature Center was burned to the ground Nov. 14. The fire was caused by arson and we believe it was because of our Pagan and EarthFirst! activities. I am pretty scared right now, and would like whatever support can be made available.

Blessed Be,
Michaela de Liuda-Olsen
P O Box 8456, Burlington, VT 05402

In support of April as National Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Women and Recovery, a quarterly newsletter for women in recovery, is dedicating the Spring 1994 issue to women who have been raped. We are seeking personal stories, poems, black and white art and photography relating to your experience. Send your submissions by March 30, 1994 to: Women and Recovery, Need to Know Press, P O Box 161775-0, Cupertino, CA 95016.

To Make a Talisman

Fold within you
Golden sun;
Wrap around you
Silver moon;
Cloak yourself
In whispering winds;
Root yourself
In the dreams of earth;
Feel within you
The mother-sea;
Feed yourself
With the fires of joy
And know that you
Will blessed be.

— Noel-Anne Brennan

We Must Take Care of Her

by Heather Lee

ISSN#1068-1698

$5.95

($6.95 Canada)